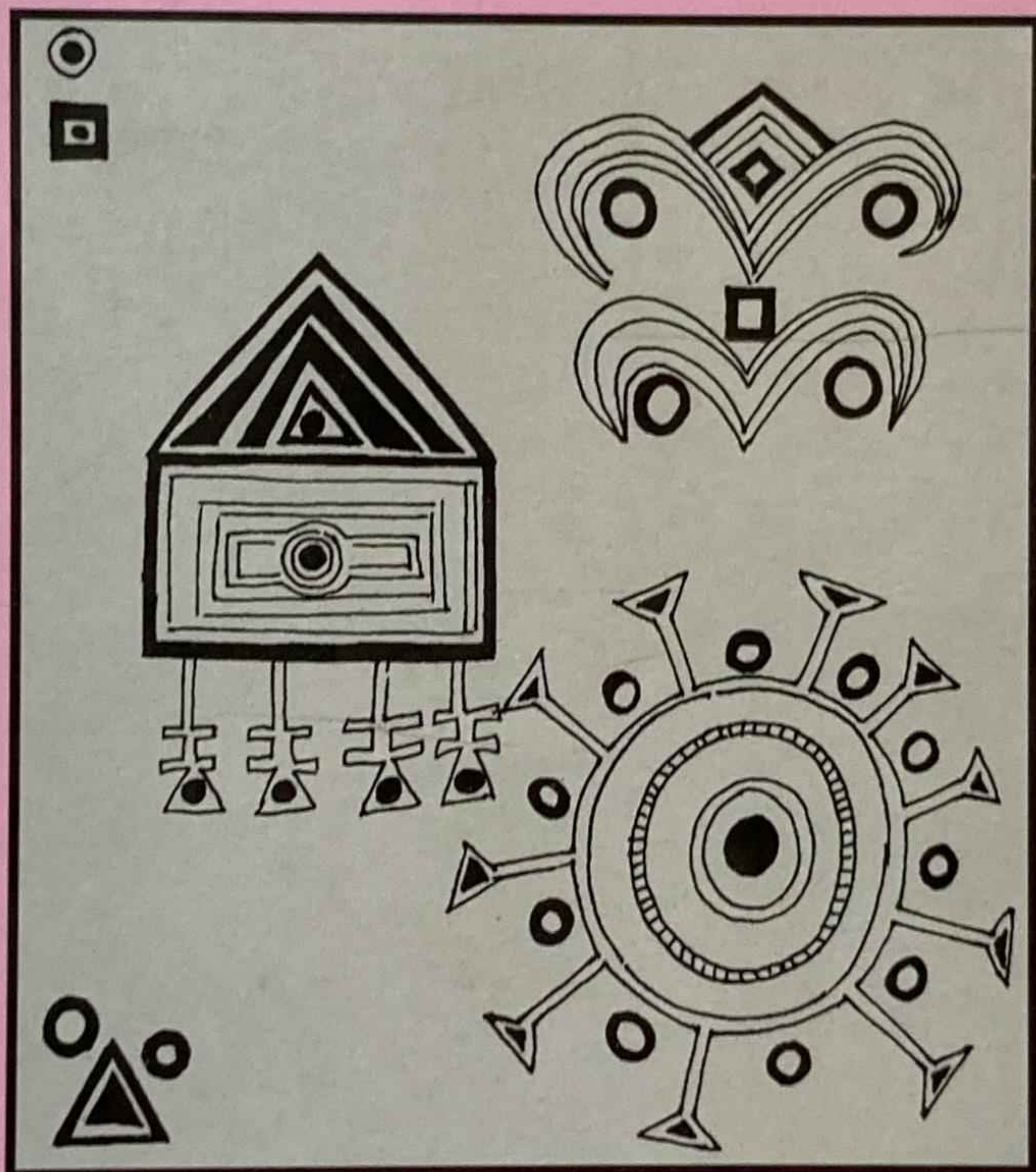


PEOPLE OF INDIA GUJARAT

PART ONE

VOLUME XXII



GENERAL EDITOR: K.S. SINGH



The Anthropological Survey of India launched the People of India project on 2 October 1985 to generate an anthropological profile of all communities of India, the impact on them of change and development process and the links that bring them together.

As part of this all India project, the ethnographic survey of all communities of Gujarat (286) was taken up in collaboration with local scholars. The results of this survey were discussed at the workshop held in Udaipur in August 1987.

The identity of Gujarat, which emerged early in the medieval period derived from the people, the Gurjara and the territory they inhabited of the same name. This territorial identity gradually expanded to encompass southern Gujarat and the presentday space and the Gujarati speaking communities inhabiting it. Gujarat is divided into three eco-cultural zones, each with its own cluster of communities called *nyati* derived from *nata* or relationship. Gujarat has a mix of distinct population groups such as the tribes, minorities, peasants, pastoralists, traders, artisans and craftsmen. It has a sizeable number of the immigrants. Gujarat populations are mostly part of the biological structure of western and north-western India in terms of morphological and genetical traits. Gujarati identity is mainly defined by Gujarati language that evolved and flowered in the later medieval period. As many as 28 languages/dialects are now spoken, but all except two, belong to the Indo-Aryan family of languages. Gujarat is the meeting ground of the northern and southern systems of kinship. Gujarat identity today is also defined

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PEOPLE OF INDIA

GUJARAT

**VOLUME XXII
PART ONE**

PEOPLE OF INDIA

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PEOPLE OF INDIA

GUJARAT

VOLUME XXII

PART ONE

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A NOTE ON THE SERIES

There is an information gap on a very large number of communities in India, and whatever information that exists on them is scanty or needs to be updated. The Anthropological Survey of India (A.S.I.) launched a project on the People of India on 2 October 1985. The objective of the project was to generate a brief descriptive anthropological profile of all the communities of India, the impact on them of change and development processes and the links that bring them together. This was in accordance with the objectives of the A.S.I., established forty-five years ago in December 1945. The A.S.I. has been pursuing bio-cultural research among different population groups from its eight regional centres. Its objectives have been redefined in the policy resolution, adopted in 1985, which commits this organization to a survey of the human surface of India.

The identification of the communities and their listing began at an early period of our history, with Manu. Regional lists of communities figured in Sanskrit works. Medieval chronicles contained a description of communities located in various parts of the country. Listings in the colonial period were undertaken on an extensive scale after 1806. The process gathered momentum in course of the censuses from 1881 to 1941. In our compilation of the lists of the communities of India under the People of India project, we drew upon ethnographic surveys, the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes drawn up by the Government of India, the lists of backward classes prepared by Backward Classes Commissions set up by various state governments, and the list included in the Mandal Commission Report. We were able to put together about 6748 communities at the start. This list was taken to the field, tested and checked, and finally 4635 communities were identified and studied. Later another 62 communities were studied and three deleted bringing the total to 4693 communities.

Unlike surveys in the colonial period, which covered British India and a few princely states, our project covers the whole

country, bringing within its ambit also those parts that had not been ethnographically surveyed earlier or where the survey had been done in a perfunctory way. Each state and union territory was treated as a unit of study. It was decided to start with the investigation of the least-known communities, and then move on to a field study of the lesser-known and better-known ones. Investigators for the survey were identified for each area on the basis of their experience and expertise. Teams of investigators of the Survey, as well as local scholars, were set up for each state and union territory to plan the surveys, seek the co-operation of local scholars, generate and evaluate findings, etc., etc. Later, editorial boards consisting of local scholars - one or more of these were nominated as co-editor/s for each local volume - were set up for each state and union territory. We sought the co-operation of the state governments in implementing the project, and this we received in ample measure, particularly from the welfare and backward classes departments of the state governments, local officers of the Census of India, tribal research institutes, university departments of anthropology, other departments of local universities, etc. Local scholars participated enthusiastically in our project as well as in the seminars held by us.

The progress in the investigation and coverage of communities from 2 October 1985 to 31 March 1992 was steady and impressive. We were able to identify, locate and study 4635 communities - to which a few more were added as mentioned above - in all the states and union territories of India, out of the 6748 listed initially. As many as 500 scholars participated in this project, including 197 from 26 institutions. About 100 workshops and rounds of discussions were held in all the states and union territories, and in these about 3,000 scholars participated. The investigators spent 26,510 days in the field, which works out to 5.5 days per community studied in the various states and union territories of India. Our scholars interviewed a large number of people, out of whom we have recorded only the key informants, i.e. 24,951. This works out to about 5 'informed' informants per community. Of the informants, 4981 were women. Our instruction to the investigators was to study a community at two or three places, and in at least two or three cultural regions into which the larger

states of India are divided. Interviews were conducted in connection with the study of the communities in 3,581 villages, mostly multi-community villages, and in 1,011 towns and cities spread over almost all the districts of India, i.e. 421 districts and 91 cultural regions. We were able, thus, to study a community on an average at about two places. It should be noted that most of the smaller communities could be studied at only one place since they were not located in more than one area.

A major achievement of this project was the preparation of cartographic maps showing the distribution of the communities and the location where they were studied. About 4,000 maps were prepared. Yet another achievement was the visual documentation of the people of India as part of the field operations. About 21,362 photographs were generated, most of them in black & white, and a substantial number in colour, by amateur photographers.

At an early stage of our project in March 1985 we decided to transfer the data to a computer. We were subsequently able to develop probably the first software in the country - and one of the first in the world - in ethnography, in close collaboration with the National Informatics Centre. From 28 May 1988 we started transferring the quantitative data collected in computer format to floppies. Simultaneously, the transfer of descriptive data (abstracts etc.) on to the computer also started at almost all the regional centres. We succeeded in computerizing an enormous mass of data, and also in producing the first results of univariate analysis by March 1990.

The descriptive material, running into 120 manuscript volumes, and the quantitative data contained in 257 diskettes, were released on 1 October 1990 by Sri Chimanbhai Mehta, the then Minister of State for Human Resource Development, in the presence of a distinguished audience in Delhi, for use by scholars at the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, and at eight regional centres of the A.S.I.

The phase of more elaborate analysis started in July 1991, in collaboration with the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. This resulted in a voluminous output of analysed data, which have been presented in a comprehensive matrix consisting of the four categories of

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populations, the constitutional, religious, occupational and locational. These sets of data, together with a map, were released by Shri Arjun Singh, the then Minister of Human Resource Development, on 24 December 1991. The last workshop on the People of India project was held at the Institute for Social and Economic Change in Bangalore, where the preliminary results of the analysis presented by the A.S.I. were discussed by distinguished scholars.

It should be noted that the study of the communities has been conducted in 3,581 villages and 1,011 towns situated in 421 districts of the states and union territories of India. The information was collected from about 25,000 of the 'learned' informants by our scholars, 500 of them, over the period 1985 to 1992. Therefore, the observations relate to this limited time frame and to the universe of the ethnographic project titled People of India. The percentages relate strictly to the responses made by the informants to the questionnaire contained in the schedule guideline and computer format, and to the queries made by the investigators at the places of investigation. The responses have been supplemented with the observations of the investigators, the secondary material from the census, ethnographic records etc. The material has been checked and cross-checked by scholars, particularly local scholars, at many levels with other sources of information.

We are presenting the material assembled under the People of India project in two parts which are interrelated. The first consists of the eleven volume national series, five of which contain an abstract on all communities across the length and breadth of the country. The data generated in this respect have been supported with the addition of information from census and other secondary sources. These volumes include one on the Scheduled Castes prepared as part of the celebration of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's birth centenary and on the Scheduled Tribes, and three on all the communities of India. The two volumes contain data on the languages and scripts and biological variation in Indian populations. The other two volumes present a quantitative profile of Indian society and communities, lists of communities and their segments, synonyms, surnames and titles. The remaining two volumes include Introduction and Anthropological Atlas.

The contributors to the national volumes on the SC, ST and all

communities are listed in Volume VI. The Glossary given in Volume VI is common to all the national volumes. At the end of each account we have given references to the texts from which we have quoted, or references for further reading. This is only illustrative. An exhaustive bibliography appears at the end of the national volumes, in Volume VI.

The second part comprises the state/union territory volumes, with detailed writeup on each community of India.

The Oxford University Press has been publishing the national volumes including the revised edition of the first volume. A consortium of publishers has been set up to publish the material on states and union territories. Seven volumes each for the north states, southern states and the islands, the central and western states are being published respectively by M/s Manohar Publishers and Distributors (New Delhi), M/s. Affiliated East-West Press Private Limited (Madras) and M/s. Popular Prakashan Private Limited (Bombay). The eleven volumes on the north-eastern and eastern states are being published by M/s. Seagull Books Private Limited (Calcutta) which also published the introductory national volume (first edition).

I trust this series on the people of India, which is based on a comprehensive anthropological survey of the country, will be found useful by all sections of our people, including students, researchers, teachers, social activists, administrators and political leaders. I hope we have laid the groundwork for a more comprehensive ethnography of the people of India which needs to be continually updated and built upon by successive generations of researchers and scholars.

K.S. Singh

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General Editor

FOREWORD

Gujarat is derived from the word Gujaratta that is the land protected by or ruled by the Gurjar, or from Gurjar - rashtra, the country inhabited by the Gurjars. The Gurjara were a community spread from the Himalayas and the Punjab to the Narmada Valley. They emerged as a dominant community in northern and central Rajasthan in the ninth century. The Gurjara people lent their name to the territory first known as Gurjara. The identity of Gujarat emerged around sixth century A.D. Gurjardesha, Gurjara Ratta and Gurjar Mandala were the terms earlier used to denote the region around Mt. Abu including southern Rajasthan and parts of north Gujarat. The word Gujarat for a larger region including Lata and Saurashtra (or Surath) of Southern Gujarat gained currency during the Chalukya period (942-1299 A.D.) The Arab traders called the entire region Gujarat. Thus the territorial identity of Gujarat gradually evolved. The presentday space inhabited by the people speaking Gujarati language was recognised as a separate linguistic region after the reorganisation of the states in 1956. Saurashtra or Surath was the good country or the land of the good people. Kathiawar derived its identity from the Kathi, its dominant ruling lineage once upon a time.

Gujarat's identity is defined *interalia* by language, territory, dress, cuisine, folklore, artistic traditions, local customs/*lokachara/desachara* and so on.

Gujarati which is derived from Sanskrit, evolved from Saurseni Prakrit and Gaurjara *apabhhransa*, and acquired a distinct character around 12 century A.D. Gujarati literature flowered from the 15th century onwards. Nagari script was used in the inscriptions of western India around the 11th century. Today Gujarat is linguistically heterogeneous. As many as twentyeight languages and dialects are spoken, all of which except Telugu, a Dravidian language, and Gamiti, an unclassified language, belong to the Indo-Aryan family of languages. Gujarati is spoken by the largest number of communities (161) followed by Kachchi (49), Urdu

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(22), Marwari (12) and Marathi (11). Twelve communities are linguistically heterogeneous, speaking more than one languages.

According to 1981 Census, Gujarati is spoken by the largest number of persons (30,817,185) followed by Hindi (746,659), Sindhi (745,182 persons), Urdu (643,926), Marathi (413,697), Bhili (406,353), Khandeshi/Ahirani (85,557), Punjabi (38,020), and Konkani (28,662). There are 5,542 persons who speak Gorkhali/Nepali. English is spoken by 3,581 persons.

Gujarati speakers are bilingual in Hindi (4,823,788 persons), Urdu (64,859), Sindhi (53,924), Marathi (20,798), Sanskrit (6,173) and Bhili (1,606). The next largest group of Hindi speakers are bilingual in Gujarati (246,936), Marathi (3,053) and Sanskrit (1,283). Urdu speakers are bilingual in Gujarati (229,420) and Hindi (73,492). Sindhi speakers are bilingual in Gujarati (266,202), Hindi (72,329) and Urdu (4,987). While Marathi speakers are bilingual in Gujarati (107,937), and Hindi (91,876). The speakers of smaller languages, Khandeshi/Ahirani are bilingual in Gujarati (19,084) and Marathi (4,003), the Konkani speakers in Gujarati (8,367), Hindi (1,564) and Marathi (1,012). The speakers of tribal language, Bhili, are bilingual in Gujarati (130,189), Marathi (6,429) and Hindi (3,922).

Gujarati is the most commonly used script in Gujarat, followed by Perso-Arabic script which is used by some of the Muslim communities.

Gujarat has been one of the intensely investigated regions in physical anthropology. As early as in 1936, Prof. G.S. Ghurye took measurements on 13 communities of Kathiawar that suggested that they were of medium stature, having medium nose and dark brown eye colour. Majumdar and Sen (1949) brought out significant differences between castes within a region, as also a closer resemblance between castes in a region. The findings of the All India Anthropometric Survey suggest that the people of Gujarat are below medium in stature, have long to round head, long to medium nose and broad face. However published reports show wide variations in stature ranging from short to above medium in scheduled tribes and other communities and short to below medium in scheduled castes in dermal patterns. Loops (46-59 per cent predominantly). Pattern intensity index ranges from 13.40-13.59. Incidence of colour blindness is high

(0.0-9 per cent). Relatively B gene (12-30 per cent) has high frequency than A gene (6-28 per cent). Incidence of sickle cell varies from 0-16 per cent and appears to be relatively high in scheduled tribes. G-6PD deficiency has been reported ranging from complete absence to as high as 16 per cent in Parsees. M gene frequency varies from 45-70 per cent. Incidence of r haplotype is relatively high (3-40 per cent). P1 (27-59 per cent) and Fya a (35-54 per cent) genes show lot of variations. Biochemical traits studied show gene frequencies as given in parenthesis : Pa (10-36 per cent), PGM1 (63-71 per cent), PGMR (0.70-0.90 per cent), ESD2 (9-24 per cent), GLO1 (24-28 per cent), Ak1 (85-97 per cent), PGDA (95-100 per cent) ADA1 (78-89 per cent).

The generalised morphometric features of Maharashtra and Gujarat present broad similarities in many characters. The range of dispersion of mean values across the groups, as well as average values over all the groups for stature and sitting height are almost similar in both the states. However, the people of Gujarat in comparison to the people of Maharashtra tend to show lower head height and finer nasal form, with a short and broad upper face. A positive correlation between the size of the metric characters and the status of a group in the social hierarchy is noticeable in both states.

In Gujarat, a region-specific trend in metric features is observed in most of the groups studied. The hilly regions exhibit lower size dimensions in majority of the characters, with an increased head height and in general broader facial and nasal features. In Rann of Kutch and Kutch areas the cephalic index is found to be relatively higher than in other two regions.

Gujarat is divided into four eco-cultural zones, defined by dialects (i) North Gujarat where Charotari is spoken comprises the districts of Panchmahal, Sabarkanta, Banaskantha Mahesana, Kheda, Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar. (ii) South Gujarat dominated by Gujarati speakers consists of the districts of Valsad, Bharuch, Vadodara, Surat and Dangs. (iii) Saurashtra zone where Kathiawadi is spoken, covers Junagadh, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Amreli, Surendranagar and Bhavnagar districts, and (iv) Kutch where Kachchi is spoken, the western most district of Gujarat.

The ethnographic survey of parts of Gujarat that formed part of Bombay Presidency was undertaken during the colonial period.

R.E. Enthoven conducted the survey within the ambit of the Ethnographical Survey of India, launched in 1901, which was based on the 27 point format framed by a group of ethnographers in 1885. The survey was conducted for eight years (May 1901 to 1909) and was severely constrained for want of funds. The survey drew upon the voluntary labours of "gentlemen" working as "honorary correspondents" and upon the Bombay Gazetteers compiled by James Campbell, extracts from which were reproduced without a specific acknowledgement, resulting in the allegation that ethnographic materials had been plagiarised with or without acknowledgement. But Enthoven was not the only ethnographer to have lifted the material from the gazetteers. The princely states of Gujarat did not generally carry out any ethnographic survey with the exception of those of Baroda which covered two-thirds of the then Gujarat and Dharmapur which produced ethnographic material on communities in their gazetteers. Ethnographic material on caste, marriage, family etc. was originally written and transcribed in Gujarati. A comprehensive review of the ethnographic studies on tribals and other communities conducted in the colonial and post colonial periods is separately presented. The Gujarat Gazetteers published since independence, which present additional materials are a refreshing update.

Satish C. Misra's *Muslim Communities in Gujarat* is an excellent study conducted during the period 1959-61, of 69 Muslim communities (as against 87 studied by us) in a historical and contemporary perspective. He briefly discusses the ethnographic scenario of the early medieval period, the Rajput lineages who resisted the Arabs and patronised trade, the Arab traders and their colonies which flourished in Gujarat port cities. The author also notes the processes of linguistic synthesis and social interaction, and of the indigenisation of foreigners. With the conquest of Gujarat by the Turks, Afghans established their colonies. The various groups of Muslim came from the north and from central Asia and from across the seas (Abyssinians, Habshis) and made Gujarat their home. Local communities, particularly, some groups of Rajputs, traders and artisans were converted to Islam but they retained their indigenous connection. The indigenisation of those Muslim groups who came from outside has further been noted. The Syeds have absorbed some of the

norms of higher Hindu castes such as prohibition of widow remarriage, payment of dowry and adoption of child marriage. Caste pattern with its sense of birth, lineage and endogamy has generally survived among Muslim communities. Other trends includes Islamisation, or increasing conformity to the Shariat and eradication of custom, group solidarity, shift from Gujarati to Urdu at home (pp. 124-5). The separate identity was also stressed by markers such as dress etc. Twenty five years later, as we found, while these trends have continued, custom has not been eradicated.

A.M. Shah and I.P. Desai's *Division and Hierarchy* (1988) is a landmark in the study of castes in Gujarat, and has been used by us in the People of India project. This study focusses on caste divisions (as many as 300) as horizontal units, various orders of caste divisions and their relationship, the direction of social change, political consolidation and so on. Shah also draws attention to difference, not only hierarchy, as a principle of the caste system.

The People of India project undertook the first comprehensive survey of all communities in all parts of present day Gujarat. It was conducted by professional anthropologists in collaboration with Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad, and the Centre for Social Studies, Surat, South Gujarat University, Surat. The survey was based on an intensive field study. The total number of communities studied by the project in Gujarat are 290, including the Maharashtrian community. However in the state volume the materials on four communities have been merged such as the Sorathia Ahir, Bamcha/Bavcha, Langha and Nat/Nat Bajania. All communities were located in rural (161), urban (29) and rural-urban situations bringing down the total number of communities in Gujarat to 286. However the database for Gujarat has been kept at 289 for the purpose of analysis.

Gujarat has its own word for caste/community, derived from *nata* relationship.

There are clusters of *nyatis*/communities, "occupational groups" unique to Gujarat as a whole or to western India which are as follows

Peasants : Patanwadia, Patidar, Patel, Kunbi, Anjana Patel, Patel (M), Turk Jamat, Chunavalia, Rajput, Sagar, Sanghar, Sathwara,

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Sheik, Thakore, Wagher, Koli, Talapada, Kathi, Khant, Maiya, Sumra, Miyana, Juneja,

Agriculture Labourers : Rathodia, Sindhi Muslim, Shenva, Siddi

Artisan groups : Tai, Panchal, Lohar, Sikligar, Suthar, Soni, Soni Dakshini

Priestly community : Sachora Brahman, Saraswat Brahman (Hussaini Brahman), Sompura Brahman, Audichya Brahman, Sadhu (Vishnu temple), Modh Brahman, Guggali Brahman, Nagar Brahman

Genealogists : Vahivancha Barot, Vayati, Vahivancha Charan Gadvi, Turi, Turi Barot,

Weavers : Vanjha, Vankar, Vankar Mahyavanshi, Salvi, Tai (hand woven), Vankar Maru, Koshti, Padamsali, Mansoori

Cattle breeders : Qureshi, Rabari, Rabari Bhopa, Raysipotra, Royma, Bharwad, Samma, Mutwa, Ker; Vyapari

Traders : Parsi, Patni Jamat, Porwal, Srimali, Sindhi Luhana, Vania, Lad Bania, Luhana, Kharwa, Modhvania, Godha, Golsinghare, Oswal, Khadayata

Fisherfolk/sailors : Wagher, Machhi, Mangela, Kharwa, Kharwa/Ghogholia

Mendicants : (H) Raval, Raval Jogi, Sadhu, Shravan, Bairagi Bawa, Dhed Bawa, Kanphatia

Mendicants (M) : Fakir

Folk dancers : Targala

Stone curvers : Theba, Salat, Sompura Salat

Arrow makers : Tirgar

Basket makers : Thori, Pomla, Kotwalia

Cotten carders : Pinjara, Multani, Ganchi Pinjara, Mansoori

Royal guards : Sargara, Patanwadia

Cleaner at gold smith shop : Patni Vankar, Dhuldhoya

Leatherworker : Regar, Bhambi, Mochi

Musician : Langha, Turi Barot, Barot

Nomad Sarania : Labana, Banjara

Trappers : Waghri

Rope dancers, Gymnasts, minstrels : Nat/Nut, Nat Bajania, Champta, Natada

Grasscutter and seller : Lodha

Neem stick (brush) seller : Waghri (Datania)

Drum beaters : Paradhi, Sargara, Vyati

Dyers and printers : Rangrej, Bhavsar

Bell metal worker : Kansara

Embroidery : Sumra, Meghwal Raysipotra

Tie and dye makers : Khatri, Brahmakshatri

Broom makers : Pomla

Snake Charmers : Vadi

Royal attendants : Khavas

Denotified group : Sansi

Sword/knife sharpener : Sarania, Sikligar, Wandharo

Warriors : Sumra, Maji Rana

Salt Pan labourers : Koli/Chunvalia

Bangle makers : Lakhera, Manihar

Cannonball manufacturer: Multani

Lamp lighters : Depala

Oil presser : Ghanchi

Paper maker : Kagzi

Distiller : Kalal

Horticulturist : Mali

Butcher/meat seller : Khatik

Monkey show maker : Madari

Of particular interest is the clustering of communities unique to each of the four regions of Gujarat such as :

Saurashtra : Patanwadia, Patni Jamat, Patni Vankar, Khant, Kathi, Sathwara, Sindhi Luhana, Rabari, Machhi, Turi Barot, Turk Jamat, Sepai Jamat, Vanjha, Langha, Wagher, Wandharo, Bhatia, Girnara Brahman, Depala, Brahmakshatri, Gavli, Bafan, Memon, Charan, Ahir Boricha, Ahir Sorathia, Ahir Paratharia, Ahir Maschoiya, Kharwa, Makrani, Baloch, Arab.

Kutch : Raysipotra, Royma, Samma, Sumra, Theba, Attarwala, Saraswat Brahman, Bharwad, Bhopa Rabari, Miyana, Jat Muslim, Bohra Alivi, Jadeja Rajput, Haolaypotra, Hingora, Hingorza, Ker, Khaskali, Langha, Majothi, Manka,

South Gujarat : Anavil Brahman, Bhil Vasava, Thakore/Thakarda, Patel, Rathodia, Tai, Kunbi, Varli, Kotwalia, Lad Bania, Mahar, Maharashtra, Mangela, Kokna, Kolgha, Bairagi Bawa, Bhavsar, Bhisti, Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu, Chaudhari, Dubla, Dhodia, Padmasali, Parsi.

Northern Gujarat : Anjana Patel, Vayati, Tirgar, Thori, Patelia, Pomla, Rathore, Bhil, Vyapari, Vahivancha Barot, Vahivancha

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Charan Gadvi, Targala, Madari, Nadoda Rajput, Barot, Audichya Brahman, Bhil, Dungri Garasia, Banjara, Goelalare, Gollalare, Bohra Alivi, Dudhwala, Kagzi, Godha, Golsinghare, Damor, Gamit, Humad, Jew, Mandali.

As many as 186 (64.36%) communities identity themselves at regional level within Gujarat and 81 (28.03%) communities at local level. Ethnographic account is available on 168 (58.13%) communities whereas 82 (28.37%) communities have historical accounts; *jatipurana* exists for 24 (8.30%) communities. These accounts reflect the changes in perception concerning these communities.

Historically, Gujarat had strong links with Rajasthan and Sindh from where many communities came. Gujarat is unique in that as many as 206 communities i.e. 71.28 % claim to be immigrants (145), from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and those from across the international border from Sindh in Pakistan. Members in 206 (71.28%) communities have migrated to their present habitat and 176 (60.90%) can recall their migration in oral tradition which is higher than national average 40.93%

Corresponding to the ecological features of Gujarat, another feature of the ethnographic configuration of the state is that it has, as mentioned above, many groups of communities such as peasants, fisherfolks, pastoralists, nomads, and trading communities. Gujarat has a larger percentage of trading and business communities. This is explained by the unique position of Gujarat linking the inland and overseas trade routes. Many trade routes passed through Gujarat along which lived the trading communities in the historical period and continue to do so even now. The Parsi arrived in Gujarat in the ninth century and emerged as landowners, moneylenders, traders and later as industrialists. The Siddis came from across the seas, testifying to the oceanic links in the formation of the ethnographic profile of Gujarat. According to 1931 census the Koli had the largest population (24.22 per cent) followed by Patel Kunbi/Patidar (12.6 per cent), Rajput (4.85 per cent), Brahman (4.06 per cent), Vaniya (2.96 per cent), artisan castes (6.5 per cent) etc. The Kolis, the largest community of Gujarat inhabiting hills, plains and the coastal region, represent extraordinary range of groups as tribes, peasants, craftsmen, labourers, fisherfolks etc. The Kolis have

also been most mobile, moving from the north to the central parts and to the east of Gujarat. There are two segments of the Talapada (local) and the Pardesi (the immigrant). A section of the Kolis emerged as petty chieftains in the medieval period, and were recognised as zamindars in Ain-i-Akbari.

Gujarat is also known for its network of hypergamous relationships among some groups of Brahmans, Banias and Patidars and across some groups among Rajputs, who have wide ranging hypergamous relationship with Kolis and other groups such as Kathis. It is interesting to observe that unlike the Rajput-Bhil relationship in Rajasthan, which produced an endogamous group Bhillalas, Rajput-Koli relationship in Gujarat did not produce any such endogamous group. Hypergamy not only promoted Rajputisation of lower groups or their Sanskritisation but also gave them status, and a share in regional power structures.

There are 17 scheduled castes and 28 scheduled tribes including five (5) primitive groups. Gujarat has a larger proportion of religious minorities. The percentage of Muslim communities (30.10%), is higher than the national average of 12.10%). The Muslim groups of Gujarat were converted from various Hindu communities such as Rajputs : Rangrej, Samma, Sepai Jamat, Sumra, Langha, Miyana, Ker etc. They were also converted from artisans such as : Pinjara, Nagori Lohar and peasants such as : Patel Muslim, Patidar. The Jain communities are also in higher proportion, the national average being 2.2 per cent

A typical feature of Gujarat scenario in terms of the Varna order is the largest proportion of the communities who are identified as Kshatriya (28.8 per cent against 15.50 per cent), almost the national average for the Brahmans (7.27 against 7.81 per cent) and Vaishyas (9.34 against 9.36 per cent) and the lowest percentage of the Shudras (12.8 per cent against 29.1 per cent). This may be due to the absorption of many lower groups in the Kshatriya varna.

The Rajputs of Gujarat have a threefold stratification. The first and the highest is represented by the former "royal" lineages such as Jadeja, Gohil, Jhala etc; the middle order formed by Darbar represents a mix of incoming Rajputs and the local indigenous aristocracy; and the third consists of the "low order"

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or *dyradi*, i.e. the Rajputs formed by the progeny of Rajputs and those who served them as *khawas*.

Another characteristic of Gujarat is the existence of a very high degree of heterogeneity and segmentation among larger communities such as the Brahmans, the Vantias, the Kolis, the Rajputs etc. The first two are divided into smaller endogamous units (*ekada*) and the other unit (*tad*). The Gujarati Brahmans are probably the most heterogeneous in the country, with 137 groups according to our list drawn from the adjoining regions and interestingly divided into four orders. The Vantias are next in terms of segmentation. Both Brahmans and Vantias seem to be inter-related in terms of the places of their origin.

As mentioned earlier, not only hierarchy but also difference is an important element of the social structure. The communities perceive difference more at the social and territorial (ecological) levels in Gujarat than in the rest of the country.

A reason for this extraordinary degree of segmentation and heterogeneity lies in the combination of Gujarat's ecology, economy and history. Yet another characteristic of the ethnographic scenario is the presence of religious segments among some communities. Separate segments Hindu/Muslim in the same community are reported from Wagher, Banjara, Patel, Samma, Sanghar, Pinjara, Lohar, Multani. Similarly Hindu/Jain segments are reported from Bhavsar, Salvi, Srimali, Lad Bania, Oswal communities. At this stage it should only be noted that these segments within communities continue to share language, cultural traits such as naming pattern, many elements of life cycle ceremonies. Hindu and Jain segments have commensal and connubial relationships. There are many communities such as Agarwal, Oswal and Bhavsar divided into Hindu and Jain sections; the Rajput, Garasia, Salat Wagher, and Banjara are divided into Hindu and converted Muslim segments. Service castes such as Nai are divided into Hajam and Valand.

Another feature of Gujarat is the existence of the notion of territorial endogamy (*gol* or circle). The communities within a territory prefer to marry within their communities and their notional territory. Members of some of the communities who have moved out, prefer to return to marry in their territory.

The other ethnographic traits of Gujarat may also be discussed.

Gujarati cuisine is well-known. Among the foods, the *chappatis* prepared from wheat (77.3), bajra (59.9) and maize (14.3) and dal made of the pulses of *moong* (70.3), tur (69.2), *gram* (65.7), *urad* (45.8), *masur* (23.4) etc. are used as staple food by a major section of the studied communities. The well-to-do or rich people use rice and wheat as their staple food, supplemented by vegetables and pulses. They also consume oil, *ghee* (clarified butter) condiments, spices, fruits, sweets, etc. The poorer section of people use less of wheat and rice. They use more of maize, bajri, nagli, millet as their staple food and hardly consume vegetables or dal or gur. A change is visible in the dietary pattern, in an increasing instance of non-vegetarian food (17.1%) rather than that of vegetarian food. Similarly use of fruit is on the increase.

The incidence of vegetarianism is very high. As many as 76 communities (26.30%) are pure vegetarian such as Jains, Brahmans, Patels, Vantias and even a Rajput group or a Muslim group such as Rabari against national average of 16.05%. Occasional non-vegetarian communities are also more numerous, 130 (44.98%) as against the national average of 37.20%.

Gujarat is the meeting ground of the kinship systems of the north and the south, an extension of the latter from Maharashtra. Consanguineous marriage in form of cross cousin marriage MBD, practised in communities 145 (50.17%) is almost as extensive as the national average of 51.09% ; FSD exists in 117 (40.48%) communities as against national average of 44.01%. The incidence of parallel cousin marriage exists in 70 communities (24.22% against 9.60%) which may be due to its existence among many Muslim populations. Junior sororate is permissible in 189 (65.40% against national average of 58.04%). Junior levirate is predominant in 119 (41.18% against 30.33%) communities.

Community endogamy is the rule (266/92.04%), normatively. Sub-group endogamy or the line of *ekada* is breaking down.

Gujarat communities, as mentioned above, are generally marked by a higher degree of heterogeneity. Social divisions exist in a large number of communities, 233 (80.62%) of them. These regulate marriage (201/69.55% against 80.82%) and indicate status and descent (173/59.86%).

Adult marriage is the norm (272/94.12% against 89.16%) though cases of child marriage (15/5.19% against 7.1-%) exists

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also. The general mode of acquiring mate is by negotiation (280/96.89% against 97.26%) followed by mutual consent (81/28.03%). Normatively monogamous, the communities also report non sororal polygyny (27/9.34%) and sororal polygyny (14/4.84%). Bride price in Gujarat cuts across tribal and nontribal categories of populations.

The rule of residence after marriage is patrilocal (287/99.31% against 97.45%). Majority communities reportedly live in nuclear family (252/87.20%) followed by vertically extended family (181/62.63% against 49.02%).

The rule of inheritance focuses on male equigeniture (258/89.27% against 79.40%) and "succession" as *karta* or head of the family goes to the eldest son (288/99.65%).

Women are perceived as occupying a low status in a very large number of communities (230/79.58% against 72.19%). They are returned as "equal" in 54 (18.69%) communities which are relatively advanced. The women have an important role in rituals (260/89.97%) and social functions (237/82.74%). Their economic roles are wide ranging, they collect fuel (188/65.05%), participate in agriculture (112/38.75%) and animal husbandry (98/33.91%), and in making of handicrafts, including embroidery.

Gujarat has interdining groups called Ther-Tasidi/Ther Tasili which consists of Rajput, Mer, Ahir, Bharwad, Charan, Rabari, Ghedia Koli, Wagher, Lohar, Suthar, Kumbhar. Most of them are non-vegetarian and related to Rajputs. There are also interdining groups of the Maldharis (pastoralists) of Saurashtra. No definitive list of such groups exist.

Market has penetrated the economy. The communities have direct link with market (253/87.54%) through daily markets (234/80.97% against 76.29%) and weekly markets. Barter is reported on a small scale in 10 (3.46%) communities. Bonded labour reportedly exists in three (1.04% against 1.21%) communities and child labour exists among 146 (50.52% against 43.32%) communities which is high in the all India perspective.

Traditional caste council is widespread, reportedly existing in as many as 245 (84.78% against 61.94%) communities. Gujarat has been a pioneer in Panchayat Raj.

Hinduism is the predominant religion (186 communities, 64.36%), followed by Islam (87/30.10% against 12.60%), Jainism

(13/4.50% against 2.16%), and those adhering to tribal beliefs (9/3.11%). One communities each returns Sikhism, Judaism and Zoroastrianism.

Gujarat has been a vibrant centre of socio-religious movements starting with the Bhakti movements, some of them cut across all communities including tribes which is discussed in this volume.

Many Gujarat communities have had a long tradition of involvement in art and crafts, such as embroidery on cloth (29/10.03% basketry (21/7.27%), weaving (14/4.84%), wall painting (16/5.54% against 6.71%), modelling (9/3.11% against 2.98%) floor painting (8/2.77%) and body tattooing (6/2.08% against 3.47%). Kutch is famous for its handicrafts and woollen goods, marked by geometrical patterns and colours. The storage bins used by the Rabari have distinctive glaze work. Garba or Rasa and Garbi are the popular dance forms in all regions. Bhavai and Ramlila are the popular folk dramas. The Bhajan mandalis and ras mandalis are popular. The tribals and pastoralists have their own dance forms. Dhamal dance form of the Siddi is noted for its vigorous rendering.

Land is the main resource (132/45.67%) which is controlled by individual owners. Members in as many as 127 (43.94%) communities have been returned as settled cultivators. Other modes of livelihood are labour (119/41.18%), business (103/35.64%), government service (139/48.10%), private service (84/29.07%) self employment (38/13.15%) and so on. Gujarat has a larger incidence of landlessness (52.94 per cent against 48.78 per cent). There are also a larger number pastoral communities (3.11 per cent as against 1.90 per cent) in the arid or semi-arid regions of Gujarat than elsewhere.

Gujarat has returned other occupations among communities such as fishing (10), hunting-gathering (3), animal husbandry (26), pastoral nomads (5) and non-pastoral nomadism (24) crafts (80).

Occupational diversification among the Patel/Patidar, Brahman etc. with their strong agricultural base has been most notable. Even where traditional occupation continues, there has been technological upgradation of traditional skills. There has been a partial occupational shift from nomadism to settled life (among Madari, Sansi, Vadi) and from pastoralism to cultivation among

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some communities such as the Rabari and the Ahir; and from agriculture to transport business. The Brahmans of different orders have moved away from priestly occupation to government service. While the upper castes have opted for white collar jobs, the members of the communities at the middle or lower levels have joined the ranks of labourers in agrarian as well as in urban industrial sectors. In case of some communities like the Ghanchi and Chakee, the shift has been total, from the traditional occupation of oil pressing to petty trade. Other communities such as Miyana, Bafan etc. who traditionally subsisted on "thieving" now work as labourers. With the collapse of the feudal order, traditional warrior groups such as Arab, Baloch, Samma, Sumra, Maratha and others have shifted to cultivation, government service, private enterprise including petty trade. The Jethi, the wrestlers enjoying royal patronage have now taken up agriculture. Mendicants like Kanphatia have also shifted to agriculture. The Ghogolia Kharwa moved from fishing to cultivation.

There is an increasing number of entrepreneurs, white collared employees, teachers, administrators, engineers and doctors in a majority of the communities. Political leadership has emerged at village panchayat level (39.9%), regional (18.5%) and at national level in many communities. This suggests growing political consciousness. Gujarat is the first state to have been experimenting with political formations such as KHAM (Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi and Muslim).

Parts of Gujarat were once a stronghold of feudalism that spawned polygyny, concubinage and *purdah* and was connected with such communities as Khavas, Charan and Bhat. Female infanticide (*dudh pitli*) was rampant among the upper groups of the Rajputs such as the Jadejas and Jateswas. With the breakdown of the feudal order after the independence, these practices have almost ceased, and the dependent communities have become autonomous. The Rajputs who began reconsidering their status as a ruling community have taken to cultivation, business and government service.

Gujarat is known for its model of development which has a strong component of non-governmental efforts. The voluntary organisations influenced by Gandhian philosophy have been very active in Gujarat since the freedom struggle. Many distinguished

leaders worked in far off areas of Gujarat among peasants and tribals. They promoted literacy, social reforms and political consciousness. The cooperative movement particularly in milk sector developed into a model for the country, making India the second largest milk producing country in the world. The POI data on development indices suggest that the impact of development, as perceived by communities in all sectors such as education, communication, irrigation etc. has been pervasive and more wide spread than in many other states. There are also gaps in the development process as highlighted by the negative responses in perception and the attitude of the backward communities such as the tribes. Formal education has been generally favoured for boys (65.1 percent) while it is only partially favoured in case of girls (27.3 percent). In the sphere of health and medical care, members in 85.5 per cent communities favour modern medicare while those in 49.5 per cent of the communities use both traditional and modern medicare. Family planning is supported by a large number of communities that is 78.9 per cent though a good number of them prefer three or four children. A large number of communities (64 per cent) have the facilities of tap water. The electricity is available and used by 86.85 per cent communities. Members in more than 90 per cent communities having reported access to the facilities of roads, post office, mid day meal scheme, fair price shops etc.

Our data suggests that within an eco-cultural sub-region or a cultural -linguistic region there is a larger sharing of traits among all communities across religious divide. These traits include consumption of foods based on the crops/grains locally grown, dress, elements of material culture, kinship structure, many a ritual of life cycle ceremonies, participation in activities of a socio-religious nature and in political movements and sharing of political power by members of a growing number of communities at all levels.

K.S. Singh

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Small motiwork
on cloth. It is a
traditional art
and design of
Gujarat

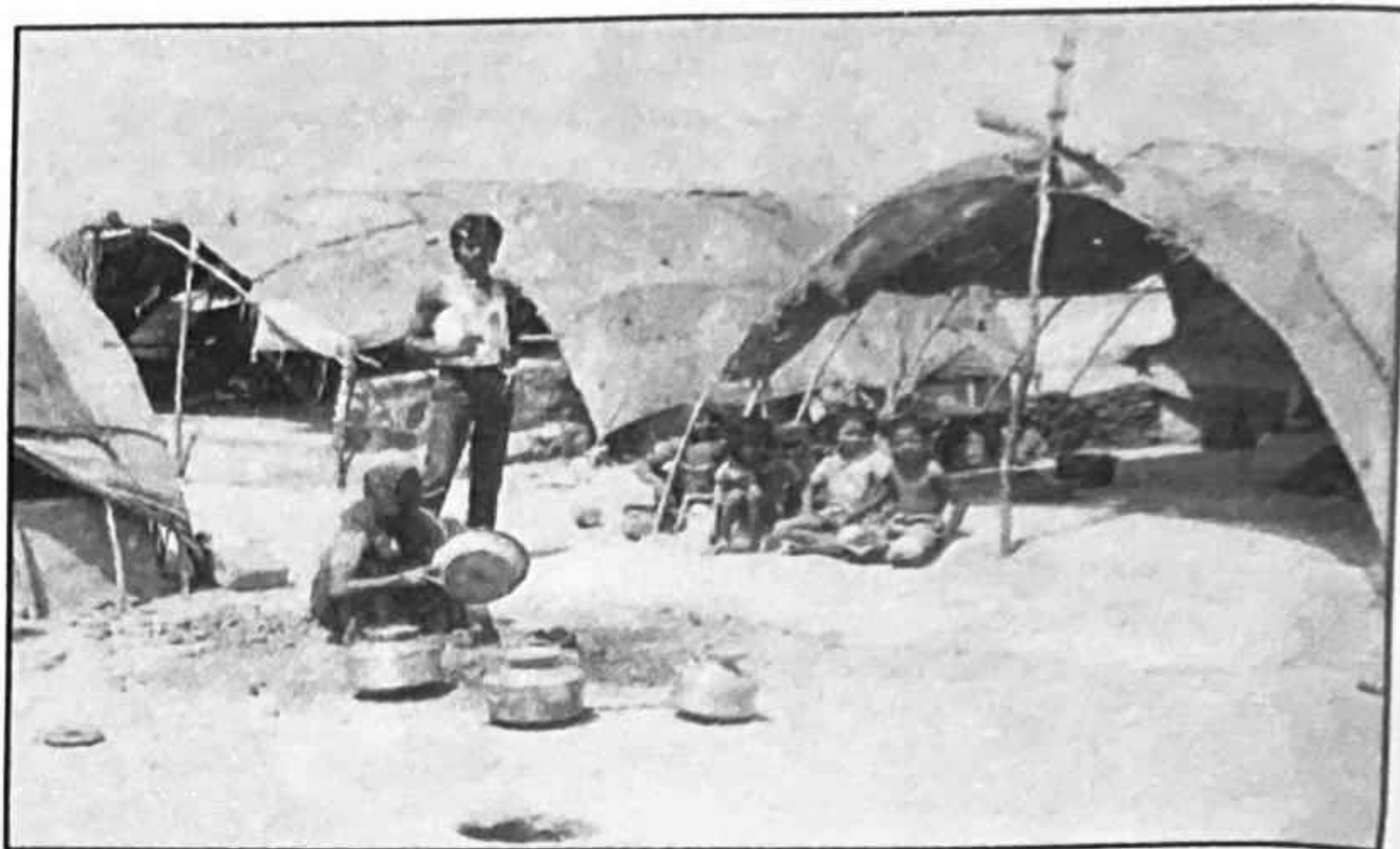


Female use to
decorate their
house in
traditional way.



Fishing the
source of
income of
Gujarat.

House type and
standard of
living.



A Couple

Embroidery
work in
traditional
design.





Portrait of
madari female

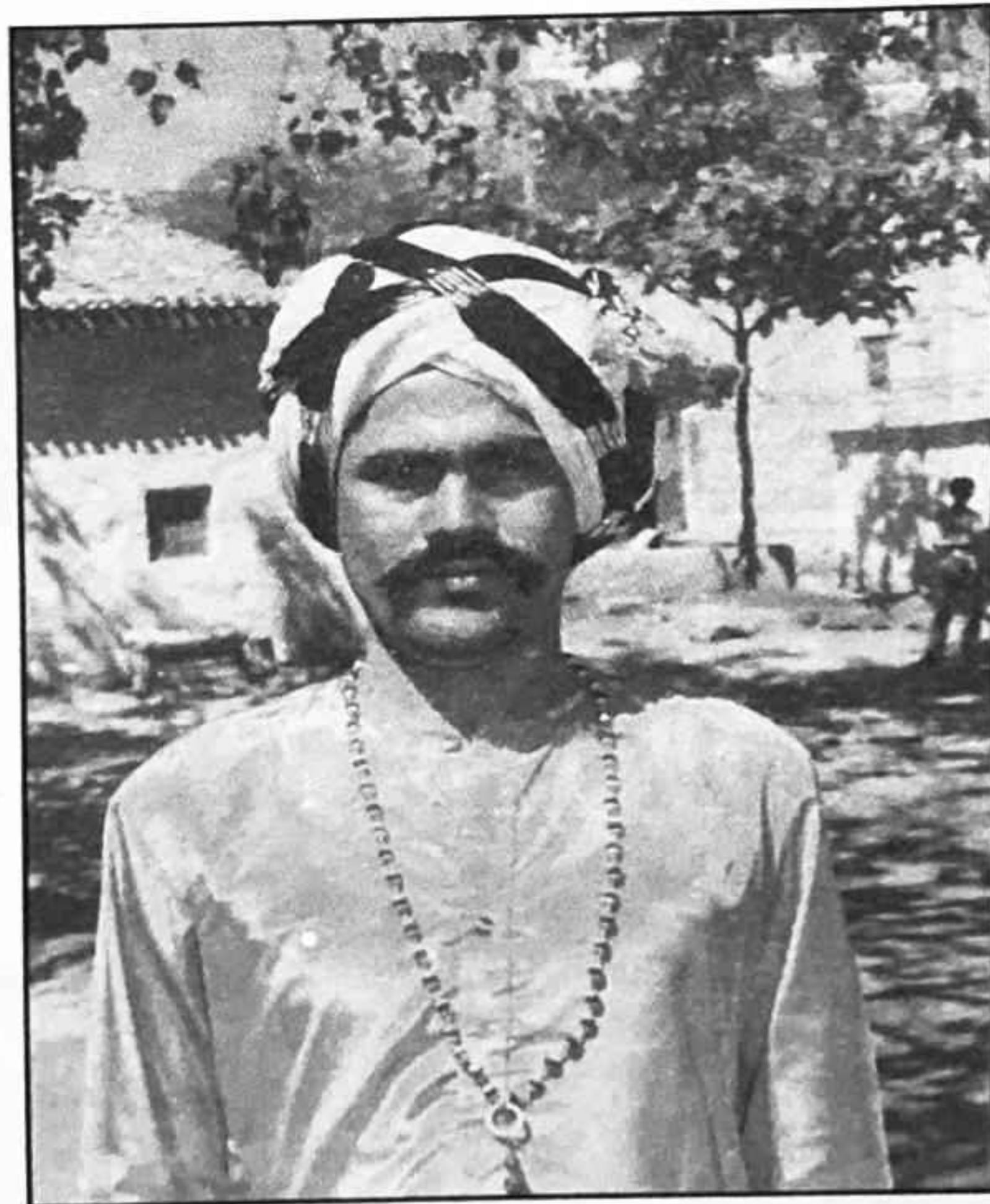
In front of
traditional
house. Kutch,
Gujarat.



Stitching of traditional garments.
Kutch, Gujarat



Source of income of their traditional business.



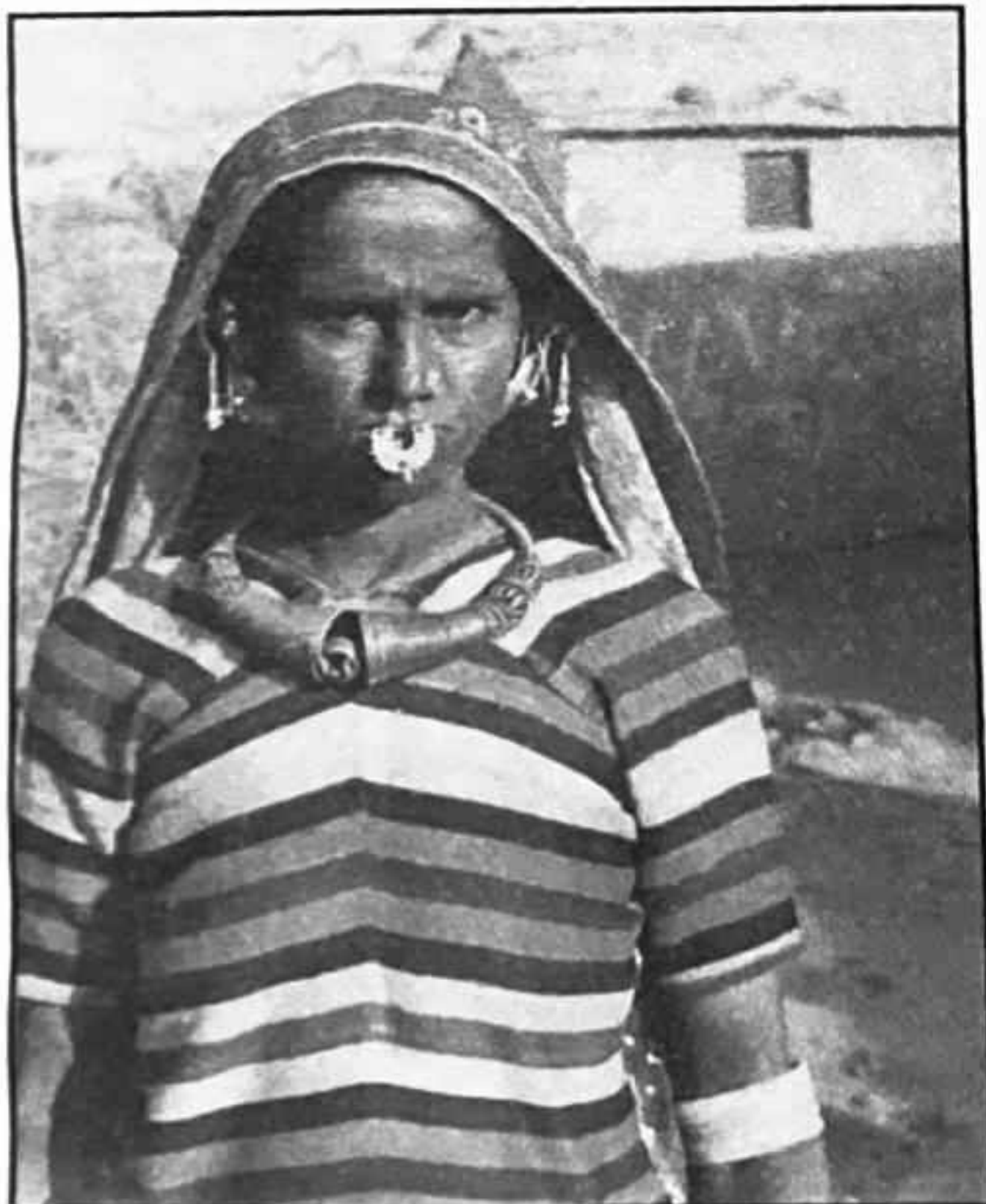
Nath (Pujari)



Me/Meta/Wadha-Koli



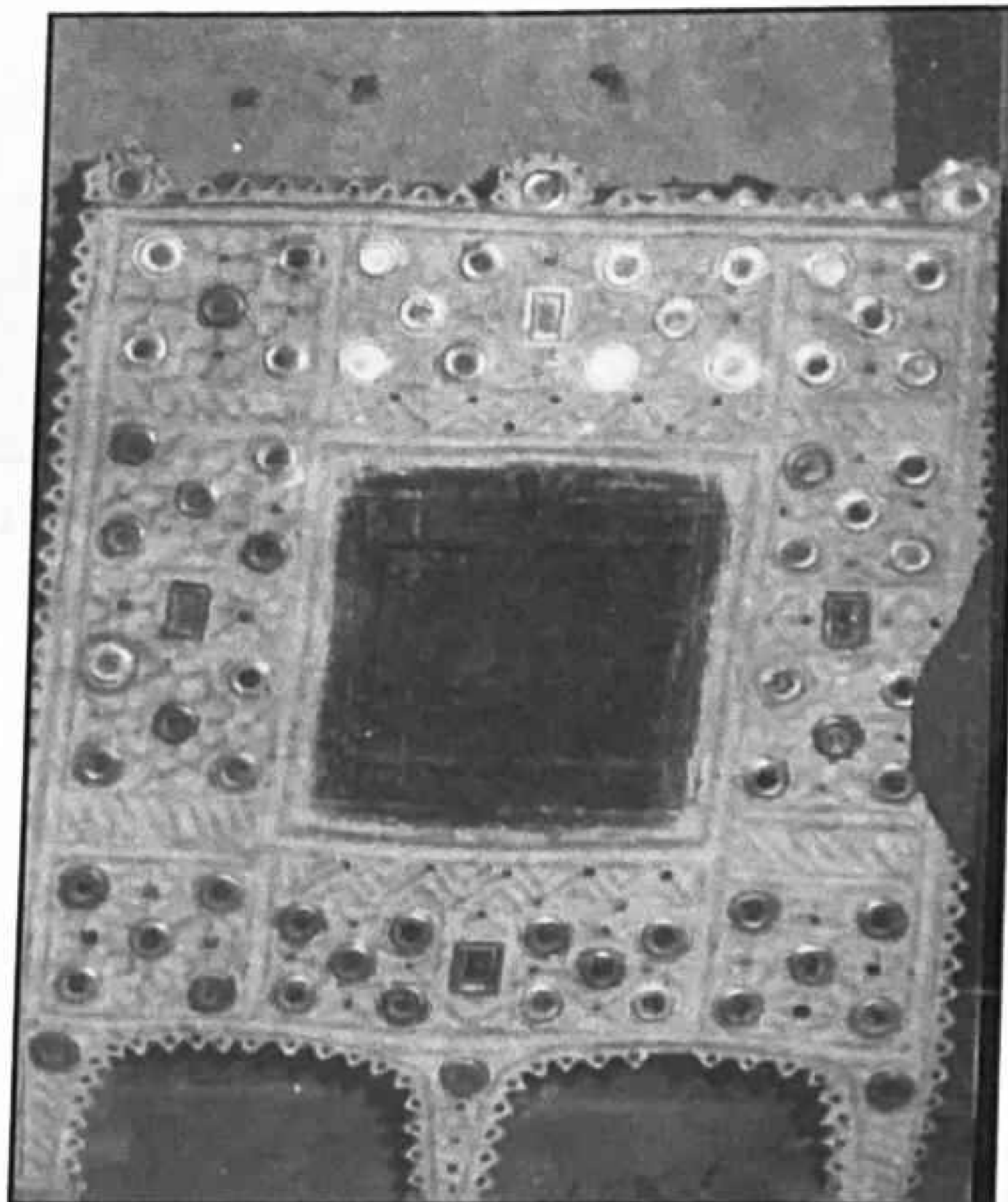
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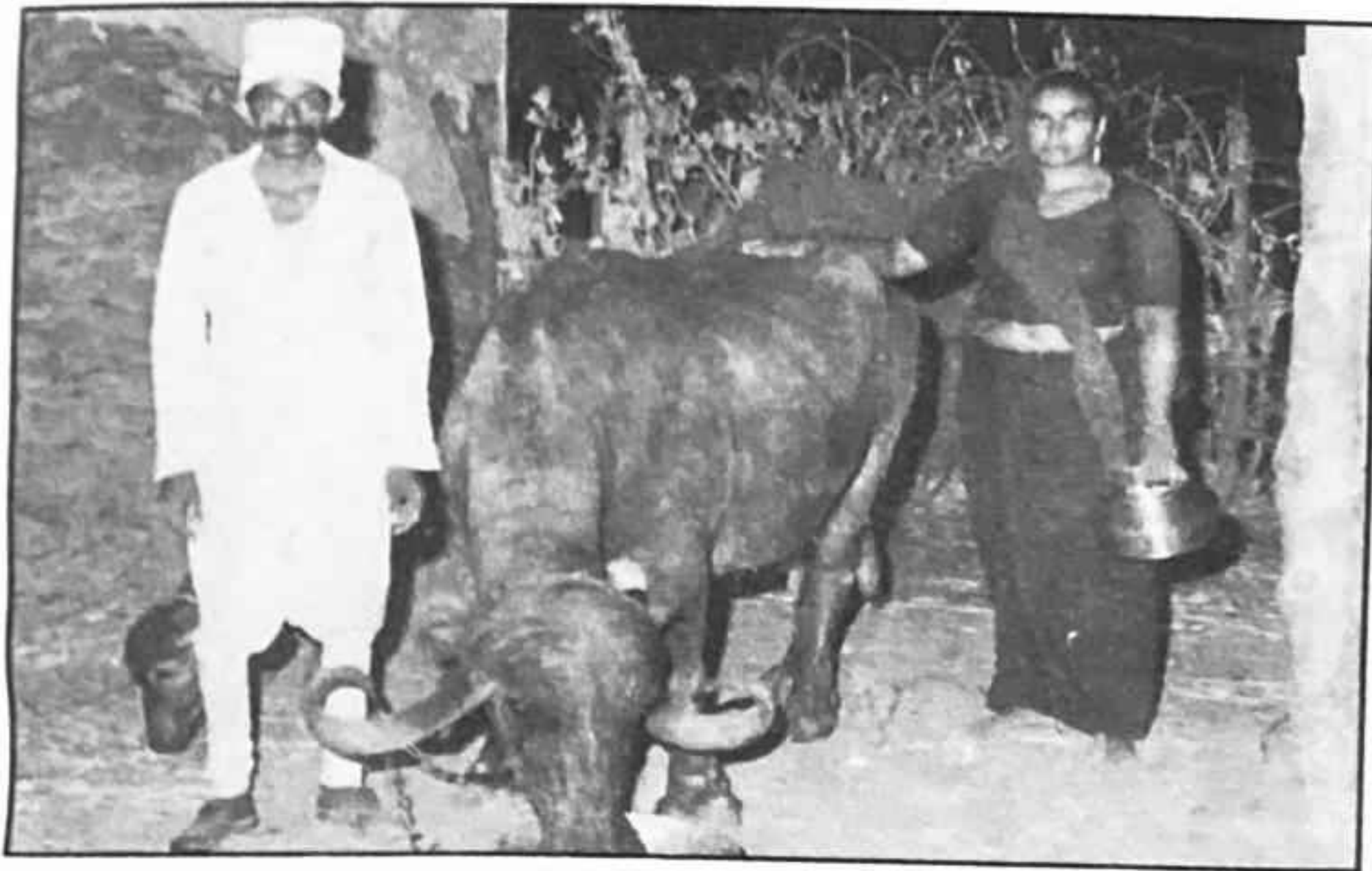
Somma



Raisipotra (Comm)



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Machkhoya Ahir



Rabari



Turi (Comm)



Khatri (Comm)

INTRODUCTION

The name 'Gujarat' is said to have been derived from the prakrit, 'Gurjar Rasta' or 'Gurjar Rastra' i.e. the land of the Gurjar people.

The present state of Gujarat came into existence on 1 May 1960 following the reorganization of the states, as a result of which eleven districts of the former Bombay state i.e. (i) Mehesana, (ii) Sabarkanta (iii) Ahmedabad (iv) Kaira (Kheda) (v) Baroda (Vadodara) (vi) Broach (Bharuch) (vii) Surat (viii) Dangs (ix) Banaskantha (x) Panchmahal (xi) Amreli were merged with Gujarat state. Five districts were taken out of the former Saurashtra and Kathiawar state and renamed as (i) Bhavnagar (ii) Surendranagar (iii) Rajkot (iv) Jamnagar and (v) Junagadh (Junagarh). The former state of Kutch has been recognised as an independent district under present Gujarat. Further, Gandhinagar and Valsad which were the part of Ahmedabad and Surat districts respectively were separated from the former, and included in the present state as separate districts. Thus, the state comprises 19 districts covering an area of 196,024 sq.km., according to 1981 census (*Census Atlas*).

Physiography : The state is situated on the west coast between 20.43' and 23.7 degrees north latitude and 68.07' and 74.29' degrees east longitude. (Source, *Census Atlas*, 9-5 Gujarat Part XII, P.121). The state is bounded by the Arabian sea on the west, the states of Rajasthan on the north and Madhya Pradesh on the north-east and on the east and Maharashtra on the south and south-east of the state. This state has a common border with Pakistan along the north-eastern fringe adjoining the Rann of Kutch.

The main rivers of the state are Banas, Sabarmati, Mahi, Tapti and Narmada. The other rivers are Bhadar, Shatrunji, Bhogavo etc. which flow through the peninsular plains and keep them fertile. The state has a forest cover of 1.7% of dense forest and 53.8% cover of thin forest. In other words, the state has a forest cover of 6,135 sq.miles, of which the largest forest area is in Surat

district having 1,999.05 sq.miles, followed by Panchmahal (860.25 sq.miles), Junagadh (722.32 sq.miles) and Dangs (668.18 sq.miles). There are some forests in Ahmedabad district also. The famous Gir forest is the only place in the country where Asiatic lions inhabit.

According to the character of the soil, the state may be divided into four zones; (a) southern zone covering Bharuch, Surat, Dangs and Valsad having deep black soil with very rich and fertile condition, suitable for cotton, jowar, rice, wheat and other vegetable crops; (b) central zone covering Kaira (Kheda), Ahmedabad, Vadodara (Baroda), Mehsana which consist of sandy loam soil fertile for garden crops; (c) northern zone covering major part of Mehsana, Sabarkantha and Banaskantha, consisting of coarse soils derived from granites, which give low yield; (d) Kutch and Saurashtra zone, the peninsular region and western half of the state, topographically situated between Gulf of Cambay and Rann of Kutch. The large portion of Kutch and Rann of Kutch consists of desert saline soil and alluvial sandy soil in Bhuj and Anjar areas. Saurashtra is semi-arid and have alluvial sandy soil, derived from sand stones, chests and conglomerates.

The state is characterised by mountains and forests. Gujarat mountains are rich in scenic beauty and have been closely associated with places of pilgrimage. Girnar and Shatrunjaya mountains are famous for Hindu and Jain temples.

Gujarat is physically divided into the three regions - (a) Mainland Gujarat, the area was a part of the former Bombay presidency, (b) Kutch- the arid region, the biggest district occupying over 23 per cent of geographical area of the state. It again consists of four zones, viz. (i) Vagad- comprising Rapar and Bachau Talukas including Little Rann of Kutch (ii) Kanthi (means the seacoast) region includes Anjar, Mundra and Mandvi talukas- the land is comparatively fertile and receives more rainfall (iii) Banni region including Pascham which includes Bhuj and a part of Nakhatrana talukas surrounded by Great Rann of Kutch occupying an area of about 840 sq. miles which stretches almost parallel to the coastline of Kutch. It is one of the best pasture land of Asia and (iv) Maghpat region, a part of Nakhatrana and also Abdasa and Lakhpat talukas and; (c) Saurashtra - the semi-arid hilly forest area and (d) Northern Gujarat the hilly areas where the inhabitants are predominantly tribals.

Climate : The climatic condition of the state is average to moderate. In some parts like central Gujarat, the temperature goes up during summer. Extreme temperature is characteristic in Kutch and Banaskantha areas, where temperature rises high during summer and gradually cools down during winter. In Gujarat the variability of rainfall ranges from exceptionally low to the lowest degrees and with co-efficient variability percentage ranging from 35 to 60 per cent and above.

Monsoon is active from the middle of June to almost the end of September. Except in the semi- arid zone of Surendranagar and north Gujarat, the rainfall varies from 100 to 1000 mm. The southern part of Rann of Kutch and western part of Jamnagar district comprise the areas of exceptionally low degrees of rainfall, whereas the northern districts of mainland Gujarat and western half of Saurashtra peninsula covers the areas falling in the next two grades of very low degree of rainfall ranging from 40-50 and 50-60 per cent respectively. These are semi-arid regions which are susceptible to occupational drought, scarcity or crop failures due to precarious and erratic rainfall both in extent and distribution. The southern and middle portions of mainland Gujarat alongwith the adjoining eastern portion of the Saurashtra peninsula occupy a better position in regard to rainfall. Heavy rainfall is observed in southern Gujarat, particularly in Valsad district.

Eco-Cultural Zones: The state has four such zones e.g. Charotari or North Gujarat, Kutch, peninsular Saurashtra, and South Gujarat or the Gujarat plains.

North Gujarat comprises the districts of Sabarkantha, Banaskantha, Panchmahal, Mehsana, Ahmedabad and Gandhi Nagar. It is hilly on the eastern and north eastern sides with undulations in the central part and sandy plains on the west. Deccan trap has irregular formations while western part is covered by a wide stretch of desert sand. The dialect spoken in this area is Charotari with an influence of the Mewari on the northern borders which is predominantly a tribal zone. Forest cover has survived the onslaught of the population and developmental activities. Jawar, Bajra and Maize are the principal cereals grown. Brahminical culture is less dominant; rather other sects influenced by Bhakti trends have a pronounced effect on the populations.

Kutch is the westernmost part of the state as well as the country. It has an area of 7616 square miles bounded on the south by the Arabian sea and on the east by the Gulf of Kutch. The rest is bounded by the Rann, it is on arid zone; hardly fourteen percent of the land is under cultivation. Cultivation is limited due to lack of irrigation facilities and scanty rainfall. A major portion is covered with thick sand. Kachchi is the dialect spoken in the area. This area lie across the trade routes from the middle east from ancient times. There are old minor ports besides Kandla port catering to transnational trade. The vast stretch of Rann is a saline desert. There are a number of pastoral communities. The settlement pattern is of irregular conglomeration type. Bajra and Jawar are the principal cereals. Kutch is famous for its handicrafts and woollen materials. The glass bead work of this region is of distinctive pattern. Here too the Brahminic traditions do not dominate. The former Rajput ruling classes like Jadeja influence the other communities. A good number of communities are migrants. Actually the migrants from Sindh entered Saurashtra, the peninsular, en route this area.

Saurashtra peninsula has undulating plains intercepted by uplands and a long coastal line. The eastern part is fertile plain and the slopes are moderate. There are several creeks and islands facilitating deepsea fishing. Kathiawadi is the dialect spoken in the area. It is home to a large number of fisherfolks. Rajputs and other ruling classes dominate the social milieu. They have hypergamous relationship and a dual organisation. There are a number of cattleherding groups. The Siddhi, an African community, were brought from the Horn of Africa as slaves by the then nawab of Junagadh. There is the tradition of erecting memorial posts for the war heroes. The ruling classess and the service castes and craftsmen have formed a continuum and a cluster, called *Ther Tasiri* comprising thirteen castes who have commensal relations.

South Gujarat consists of the plains and hilly areas. The slope is from north-east to south-west. The area in its larger part has black soil and alluvial soil. This is a cotton producing area and considered the granary of the state. It gets good rainfall. Gujarati is the language of the area. The area has also large tribal groups like Dubla, Dhodia, Naika, Chaudhari, Bhil, etc. Jawar, wheat

and rice are the principal cereals. Various cash crops such as cotton, sugarcane are grown. Salt is commercially made from sea water. The area is flourishing and rapid industrialisation is changing the fabric of its society.

Historical background : Archaeology has traced the earliest human culture to the valleys of Sabarmati and Langhnej where a rich and interesting cultural complex has been unearthed, dating back to 2500 B.C. In case of Laghnej this part of Gujarat was not as advanced as Lothal or the Indus Valley because these cultures were contemporary to Laghnej and were much more advanced than the latter. No archaeological evidence is available for reconstructing the early Aryan and Puranic history of Gujarat. Therefore for the period from the Rigveda to the rise of Maurya dynasty we have to rely on the literary evidences. Gujarat has been an integral part of the Aryan territory, which was divided into three divisions known as Anarta, Saurashtra and Lata. The legendary Lord Sri Krishna is said to have built his kingdom at Dwarka in Dwapar (B.C. 1500-500) which was later ruled by Yadavs (B.C. 300- 100 A.D.), Mauryans (B.C. 300), Scythians and Huns (B.C. 200- A.D. 500) and Guptas (A.D. 320). These dynasties were followed by the Gujjars (A.D. 400-600), the Arabs (A.D. 600-800) and the early Jadejas.

During the second half of the sixth century the Gujjaras established their political authority in the heart of Rajputana at Madavyapura near Jodhpur. Consequently, this region came to be called Gujarashtra. The Gurjaras who came from outside settled in this region which came to be known as Gujarat.

In 998 A.D. Anahilwada ascended the throne of Patan. It is from this period onward that the nomenclature of Gujarat started appearing in Gujarat history, particularly after Siddharaj Jayasing (1094-1143 A.D.) and Kumarapala (1143-1174 A.D.), the builder of the famous Delwara temple at Mt. Abu. The omniscient Jain highpriest and scholar Hemachandra Suri (1089-1173 A.D.) established his reputation as a grammarian in Gujarat. Architecture, temples etc. in Jain tradition contributed much to developing Gujarat culture.

The Khilijis established themselves in Gujarat between 1298-1300 A.D. In 1300 A.D. Aslapkhan became the first "suba" of Gujarat. In year 1316 Allauddin died and power shifted from one

hand to another. After the end of the dynasty of Khiliji came the Tughlak regime. During the rule of Mohammed Tughlak Gujarat was governed by Ulimulk Rastikhan. He revolted against the authority in Delhi. So the Sultan sent Zafarkhan Muzaffakhan to Gujarat to suppress the revolt. He founded a town called Jewetpur near Patan. His son Ahmed Shah ascended the throne in 1411 A.D. and founded Ahmedabad.

There was a long drawn out struggle between Humayun and Bahadur Shah for Gujarat. Akbar took complete possession of Gujarat in year 1573. Shahjahan was made viceroy of Gujarat. Shahjahan became the emperor of India and sent Azam Khan as 23rd Viceroy of Gujarat. Prince Murad with the moral support of his brother Aurangzeb took command of Ahmedabad. He captured the castle of Surat in 1657. Later on he was officially coronated at Ahmedabad. The period of 134 years from the conquest of Gujarat by Akbar in 1573 to the end of Alamgir's reign was a period of strong stable government and peaceful administration.

The Marathas obtained a hold over the province of Gujarat. The struggle for power between the Marathas, Mughals and the French, the British and the Dutch ended with the British establishing their supremacy in 1612. The British period saw the transition of Gujarat from the medieval to modern times. Two illustrious sons of Gujarat, Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel influenced the course of Indian Independence struggle to such an extent that their names will ever be remembered by the Indian people.

Gujarat ecology explains its ethnographic features. A vast sea coast, sea ports viz. Mandvi, Kandla, Dwarka, Bhavnagar, Porbandar, Veraval in Kutch - Saurashtra region and Gandevi, Surat, Bharuch in South Gujarat with two major gulfs Cambay and Kutch together with fertile land, provided opportunities for the influx of various peoples from Iran, Arabia, Africa on one side and Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Sumatra, Java etc. on the other side as refugees, warriors or traders resulting in the mixing up of so many ethnic and cultural streams in Gujarat.

Language/Dialect : Sanskrit was the medium of learning in the early period. The language of Gujarat now is Gujarati. Like other Indo-Aryan languages, Gujarati is derived from Sanskrit. This language developed around 11th century. At present Gujarati is

the educational and official language of the state. As Gujarat is home to immigrant groups of different cultures, there are many spoken dialects and languages such as Gujarati, Hindi, Kachchi, Vagri, Marwari, Urdu, etc. As many as 28 languages/dialect are spoken in Gujarat such as Ahirani, Banjari, Bhili, Braj Bhasha, Bundhelkhandi, Dhanki, Dhodi, Gameti, Gujarati, Hindi, Hindusthani, Kachchi, Kathiawari, Khadi Boli, Kokni, Kotwalia, Malvi, Marathi, Marwari, Mewari, Multani, Naikadi, Sarhadi, Sindhi, Telugu, Urdu, Varli.

Out of the total population Gujarati is spoken by 30,774,762 persons followed by Sindhi (727,600), Hindi (722,294), Urdu (609,056), Marathi (386,697), Punjabi (33,866), Malayalam (30,610), Telugu (28,951), Tamil (21,852) and so on (1981 Census).

Census Demography : The total population of Gujarat according to 1981 census was 34,085,799 constituting 4.97 per cent of the national population. The density of Gujarat works out to 174 persons (against national average of 208 persons) per sq km and it ranks 18th amongst all the states at the national level. The population of Gujarat is distributed over 18114 inhabited villages and 255 towns of 184 taluks/mahals of 19 districts. Ahmedabad district with a population of 3,875,794 persons holds the first rank in 1981 census followed by Kheda district with a population of 3,015,07, Vadodara (2,558,092), Mahesana (2,548,787 persons), Surat (2,493,211), Panchmahals (2,321,689 persons) and so on. Gujarat has an average district population of 1,793,989 which is higher than the national average of 1,663,069. The average household size works out to 5.74 persons (rural : 5.81 and urban 5.59).

The population of Gujarat according to 1971 Census was 26,697,475 registering a decadal growth rate of 27.67 per cent during 1981 census. Gujarat is one of the highly urbanised states of India with 31.10 per cent of its population living in urban areas., and ranks third highest in the country.

The sex ratio, according to 1981 census was 942 females per 1000 males which is slightly higher than the national average of 933. Out of the total population of the the state, 51.90 are enumerated as never married, 43.44 per cent married, 4.44 per cent widowed and 0.31 per cent as divorced and separated persons. The rest have not recorded any marital status.

According to 1981 census the literacy rate of Gujarat works out to 43.70 per cent against the national average of 36.23 per cent. According to 1971 census the literacy rate was 36 per cent. According to 1981 census the literacy rate among males is 54.44 per cent and 32.30 per cent among females. Gujarat ranks fourth in the literacy rate amongst all the states. In 1981 census the literacy rate among the scheduled castes was 39.79 per cent whereas among the scheduled tribes it was 21.14 per cent.

The total population of the scheduled castes according to 1981 census is 2,438,297 which accounts to 2.33 per cent of the total scheduled castes population at the national level and 7.15 per cent of the total population of the state, compared to the 15.75 per cent of the scheduled castes population at the national level.

The total scheduled tribes population in Gujarat state is 4,848,586 which constitutes 9.39 per cent of the total scheduled tribe population of India and 14.22 per cent of the total population Gujarat, compared to the 7.76 per cent of the scheduled tribe population at the national level.

Migration : According to 1981 census, there are 113.58 lakh migrants in Gujarat which constitutes 33.32 per cent of the total population. Of the total migrants 36.01 lakh are males and 77.57 lakh are females. Among the total migrants again 29.51 per cent are migrants from within the states, 3.38 per cent are from other states and UTs and 0.43 per cent are from outside India. Of the total migrants born in the other states of India 4.07 lakhs or 35.26 per cent are born in Maharashtra, 2.81 lakhs or 24.38 per cent are born in Rajasthan and 1.92 lakh or 16.66 per cent are born in Uttar Pradesh.

Thus the immigrants came in large numbers from Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Daman and Diu, Pakistan, Nepal and Burma and from various countries of Africa. However migration flows mostly from adjoining states in India and from the neighbouring country of Pakistan.

Except Ahmedabad, no other district has reported more than 10 percent immigrants among its populations. Ahmedabad being the largest industrial metropolis of the state, attracts people in larger numbers from the neighbouring states of Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, while the majority of immigrants from outside India are displaced persons from Pakistan. The

number of immigrants in Dangs district is low in terms of absolute figures but considerable (7.92%) from the view point of the population of the district. Most of them come from the neighbouring state of Maharashtra. Displaced persons from Pakistan predominate among the immigrants in Kutch which lies on the Indo-Pakistan border. Most of the immigrants are settled in urban areas and had very close social and economic ties with Sind till partition.

The percentage of the immigrants is higher in the districts of Surat and Baroda. Baroda has also a sizeable number of displaced persons from Pakistan. The proportion of immigrants to total population in several districts are as follows : Ahmedabad has 3.39 per cent immigrants while Dangs has 10.47 per cent; Kutch has 7.92 per cent and Surat 4.63 per cent of the immigrant population; Vadodara 3.88 and Banaskantha 3.25 per cent of their population as migrants; Jamnagar has 2.89 per cent immigrants while Junagadh has 2.68 per cent. Sabarkantha and Rajkot have 2.45 and 2.32 immigrants respectively. Bharuch has 2.17 per cent immigrants while Panchmahal has 1.93 per cent. Kheda and Bhavnagar have 1.64 and 1.42 per cent immigrant populations respectively. Mehsana has only 1.28 per cent of immigrants. Surendranagar and Amreli have a similar percentage 1.09 and 1.08 respectively of immigrants.

Economy : A majority of the communities of Gujarat subsist on agriculture and agriculture related activities. Among the non-agricultural sectors dairying through co-operatives has been very important, which has brought about the white revolution. Industrialization is responsible for bringing out an overall change in the state. The other reason for the shift of agricultural economy to the secondary place is the fragmentation of land-holdings. However, there are many communities who still cling to traditional occupations such as trading, shaving and haircutting, oil pressing, fishing etc.

The primary occupations of the communities living in rural areas are cultivation, wage labour, mining and quarrying. The secondary occupations comprise household industry and construction works. The people in semi-urban areas are mostly engaged in both agricultural and industrial work. The people in urban areas are primarily engaged in trade and commerce.

transport, servicing, storage, communication and other occupations.

According to 1981 census, the main workers constitute 32.33 per cent of the total population. Of the total workers, 37.46 per cent are cultivators, 22.65 per cent agricultural labourers, 12.93 per cent are in manufacturing, processing, servicing, etc., 2.44 in household industry, 7.65 in trade and commerce, 3.83 per cent in transport, storage and communication, 1.52 per cent in construction, 2.37 per cent in livestock, forestry, fishing, etc., 0.34 per cent in mining and quarrying and 8.81 per cent are in other services. The marginal workers constitute 5.04 per cent and 62.73 per cent are nonworkers. Among the males 52.19 per cent are main workers and only 11.03 per cent are main female workers.

In Gujarat, the agricultural implements used by the farmers are still mostly traditional. They use *hal* (plough) for ploughing land and the *orano* - a bamboo tube is tied with a leather strap to the plough and is used for sowing seed, similarly *karab* (harrow) is made in different size to suit different crops such as cereals, tobacco and chillies. The other tools in general use, for different purposes of agriculture, are (i) *dataru* (sickle), a semi-circular blade of iron attached to the handle of wood and used for harvesting and cutting grass. (ii) *khurpi* - 'T' shaped sharp end iron implement used in weeding and cleaning the crops. (iii) *kodali* - spade - L shaped implement whose handle is made of wood and working end is flat sharp iron and is used for digging and cutting canals for irrigation, crops and other purposes. (iv) *pardoshovel*, a flat-headed thick iron implement used for digging of soils. (v) *kulhadi* (axe), made of iron and wood and used for cutting wood and felling trees. (vi) *gadu* (bullock cart) is used in almost all the areas of the state, it is usually used for carrying crops and (vii) *damania*, about half the length of the *gadu*, is chiefly used for carrying passengers.

In recent years improved implements such as, Kargat hoe, Jaihind harrow, paddy paddler and tractors alongwith the improved varieties of seeds have been used resulting in good yield.

Dietary Habits : The majority of Hindus specially the higher castes, eat vegetarian food whereas the Muslims, Rajputs and

some of the lower castes and all the scheduled tribes are non-vegetarians. There is no difference in food habits between males and females except in the matter of alcoholic drinks which are consumed by males in communal feasts or ritual functions. In some communities the women are vegetarian while their men take non-vegetarian food outside their homes. In the changing pattern of food habits the consumption of vegetables has increased.

Some communities have been observing food taboos. For example, eating of egg and chicken is taboo among the Sanghar. Taking *sakar mora* (white cucumber) besides onion, garlic and lentils is taboo among the Sompura Salat. The Alivi Bohra abstain from eating *hing* (asafoetida), *suran* (yam) and yellow coloured roots. Gujarati Brahmans and Sompura Salat do not take any vegetable for four months called *chavmasa* on religious grounds.

Dress and Ornaments : Varieties of dresses and ornaments are in use among the communities of Gujarat. Among the Hindus, most of adult men wear *dhotee* (waist cloth) and white *kameez* (shirt). Some of them also wear half coat or jacket, white or coloured, with Gandhi topi or coloured cap on their head. Many male members among the Patel, Bania and other communities use *safa* (turban) of different types. Men also use various types of shoes. On festive occasions some of them wear shoulder scarf and shawl. Adult women or married women wear *kabja* (blouse) or *choli* (tight fitting bodice), *chania* or *lenga* or *ghagra* (petticoat) and *odhani* (short saree). They also wear full length saree. A good number of women wear sandals. They delight in wearing a great variety of ornaments of gold or silver. On festive occasions they wear colourful dresses and ornaments. Boys wear kurta, pajama or shorts and shirts, some of them also use cap on their heads. Girls use short *choli ghaghra* and *odhani* (short saree), frocks etc. Among the Muslim the males wear dhoti or *lungi* or *pyjama*, kurta and long shirts of different colours, and wear black caps on their heads. The Bohra-Muslims who are sophisticated mostly use white clothes and white caps embroidered with golden jerry. The Muslims females wear salwar-suits, sarees and *burkha* (veil). During their religious festivals, they wear gold or silver ornaments. The clothing of some nomadic or lower class people like Rabari, Bharwad, Banjara etc. is distinct. The men wear very thick short *dhoti*, *angarkha* (short tight waistcoat), *twil scawes* fluttering round

their waist and put thick white or red *safa* (turban) on the their head. Their women wear short thick woollen or cotton *lengha* or *ghaghra* (skirt) covering their breasts with short thick *choli* (blouse) and put woollen or thick cotton *odhani* (half saree) over their body and head. Their attire is coloured, black, red, yellow etc. They use different types of thick bangles, ear-rings, necklaces etc. made up of ivory, brass and silver.

In respect of dress among the people of Gujarat, a number of changes are observed. Formerly, there were seventy two varieties of turbans in western India and the adult males wore them daily or on special occasions but now hardly a few people wear turbans. Very few people wear waistcoats. Long coats are not seen in villages. Use of *choli*, *ghaghra* is on the decline. In case of girls, frocks are fast replacing *ghaghra* and *kabja*. Tendency to wear fine fashionable dresses has now increased.

Settlement pattern: The settlement pattern varies. The urban centres have mainly *pucca* houses and multi-storied buildings and are congested. The houses in villages or rural areas are linear clustered and majority of the houses, are *kachcha*. The Brahmans, Rajputs, Vaishyas, Patels, Patidars, Lohanas and upper class Muslims are having mostly *pucca* houses, larger in size; whereas the houses of Dheds, Bhangis, Harijans, Adivasis (tribals) and lower class Muslims are mostly *kachcha* and smaller in size. In the houses of upper castes, there is evidence of greater affluence in the form of articles of comfort and luxury. Poverty of lower classes is one of the reasons for difference in matters of cleanliness, size and appearance of the houses. A number of changes have occurred now- a- days. Formerly the houses were mostly *kachcha* and 4-slopped or 8-slopped, but now a majority of the people try to build a *pucca* house of good shape, single or double slopped, a separate room for kitchen, bed-room with air facilities; some have bathroom, sanitary facilities and drawing room with good quality furniture. In the old houses, the floor was dressed with mud and cattle dung, but now the new houses are mostly having flooring of stones, cement or tiles. Formerly roof was mostly made of *nalias* or thatches or leaves; now many of roofs have corrugated or iron sheets, asbestos sheets, tiles or cemented. In the old houses, court-yard was used for cattle-sheds, storing crop yields, firewood etc; but now it is gradually changing and the courtyard

is well cleaned, used for gardening and as a common passage to next houses.

Social Organisation : Hindu communities in Gujarat are heterogeneous. The traditional caste-Hindus are categorised into (i) high, (ii) middle and (iii) low or residual. The middle category is further divided into (a) peasant castes with traditionally middle order status; (b) artisan (service) castes. Usually categorisation is based on (i) varna status (ii) community's self perception and its perception by other communities (iii) land ownership and (iv) primary and secondary occupation. Among the Muslim or Christian communities, difference on the basis of birth is not recognised. Among Muslims, theoretically there is no caste system, norma . The Syed rank highest among the Muslim communities, followed by Shaik, Moghul and Pathan in that order. There are also agrarian castes such as Malik and Molesalam Girasia, trader and artisan communities such as Memon, Khatri, Khoja, Bohras and lastly service communities. The Arab and Baloch occupy the middle order. Islam attracted many lower castes and artisans besides a few trading communities like Bhatia and Lohana. The Pirs played a role in conversion when Gujarat was under rule of the Muslims. In Islam, there is no place for hierarchy and pollution stigma. But a section of Muslim communities converted from lower castes and artisans follow their ancestral occupations and marry within their community. They still follow the norm of clan exogamy.

The family generally, is of extended type. Descent is traced through patrilineality. Rules regarding inheritance of property recognise the male line and property is equally distributed among the sons after the death of the father. The eldest son succeeds to the office of father in family matters. Among the Muslims most of the social rules are based on the Shariat. Majority of the Muslim families belong to nuclear type, as they are mostly engaged in trade and business. Joint families are mainly found in rural areas. About 70-75 percent of their ancestral property is equally distributed among the sons and 25-30 percent of the property goes to the daughters. Sucession rule is same as among the Hindus. During the last few decades the traditional joint family and the familial framework have been undergoing a qualitative transformation.

The main rituals centre around birth, marriage, and death. *kholobharvo* (lap-filling) or *agharani* is an important pre-delivery ceremony performed mostly at the husband's house during the 5th, 7th or 9th month of first pregnancy. On the sixth day after birth, *chhati* or *suraj puja* is performed. It is a purificatory rite with which the period of birth pollution ends. The mother takes the final purificatory bath after which she is free to enter the kitchen. Naming ceremony or *janampatti* of the child takes place on the 6th or 12th day whichever is suitable, according to the instruction of Brahman Pandit. On an auspicious day at the age of 5th or 7th month of new born baby, *annaprasan* (first cereal feeding ceremony) is performed at the husband's place.

Among the Muslims *japa* or first pre-delivery ceremony is followed by *aqiqa* on the 7th/14th/21th day after child birth. When the child completes four years four months and four days *Bismilla* (initiation) ceremony is performed. The *khatna* or *sunnat* (circumcision) is an important ritual which takes place when the boy reaches five or after six months upto nine years.

Traditionally, Hindu marriage is an inviolable sacrament. The rites of *panigrahan* or *kanyadan* and *saptapadi* (seven circumambulations of holy fire) are the key rites that unite the couple. Among some of the communities, traditional Hindu rituals indicating Rajput heritage are observed. This includes groom going to bride's house riding on a horse, observance of *toran* rite, erection of *mandap* and observance of *bhat* ceremony by mother's brother. Among the Muslims the *nikah* (marriage) is performed in consideration of the *mehar*.

In Hindu society they do not marry within their own gotra or clan, and *sapinda* exogamy is observed. Monogamy is the norm. But polygamy exists among some castes. Child marriage still exists among the lower castes. The age at marriage at present is 16 to 20 years for girls and 20-25 years for boys. *Samuhik lagan* (community marriage) is popular among some communities like Kadia, Garvi, Chunwalia Koli, Kanphatia, Ghogolia Kharwa, Chandra Sena Kayastha Prabhu etc. Rule of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Marriages are usually settled through negotiation. Economic hardship explains inability to pay brideprice which has resulted in increasing adoption of marriage by elopment or service among the Adivasis of Gujarat (e.g. Varli, Dubla). Bride-

price (or *dapo*) is a feature of the tribal organization and lower castes. But among higher castes dowry or *dahej* both in cash or kind is prevalent. Divorce is now permitted under the law and is also freely practised by some of the lower castes by tradition and custom. Its extent among the higher castes is comparatively low. Remarriage for both divorcee and widowed is common in almost all lower caste families and a few among the higher castes practise what is locally called *natra* (widow remarriage). Widow marriage in the form of *diyarvattu* (junior levirate) is permitted and practised among some of the lower castes and tribes. Inter-caste marriage is reported among the younger generation in urban areas.

Both parallel and cross cousin marriages are permitted among the Muslims. A unique case of similarity between Hindu and Muslim communities is in the endogamous mode of mate selection and a strong sense of birth and lineage. Some caste councils boycott the couples or families who go outside the community for a spouse. The council may not be so strict in cases of remarriage of widow/divorcee. They mostly prefer adult marriage. Monogamy is the common practice. Rule of residence after marriage is patrilocal. The payment of *mehar* (dowry) among the Muslim communities is common practice. *Talaq* (divorce) is sanctioned as per Shariat. Remarriages of both widowed and divorcees are permitted.

Some interesting features are common to the marriage rituals of Muslim and Hindu communities. For instance, Sumra a Muslim community has a custom similar to that of Hindu in which bride and groom will not move out of the house after anointing of turmeric paste and ablutions. They go out only on the date of *nikah*. Five or seven days before *nikah* one hand of bride and groom is tied with a band containing betel leaves and turmeric powder. The knots are opened after *nikah*.

Village exogamy in mate selection is observed among some communities which is a typical characteristic of north Indian communities. Dowry is paid both in cash and kind called *vankhdo* among Anavil Brahmins whereas seventeen vessels made either of brass/copper are given to the groom as *dahej* (dowry) among Bawarchi community.

As mentioned earlier tribes have the tradition of paying bride-price. But under the impact of industrialization, urbanization and culture contact with caste Hindus, some Naikas and Dhodias

of Valsad district, particularly when a boy is in government service or industrial worker, demand some items like wristwatch, transistor, etc. from the bride's father. In such cases, payment of bride price is retained only for the sake of formality.

The Bhopa Rabari observe a peculiar custom. Only after getting the nodding of the head of a goat at *kuldevi's* (lineage deity) shrine, they perform betrothal and go for marriage when the goat nods its head. Marriage rituals are performed at groom's house in the Barda community. Maternal uncle (mother's brother) has a very important role in various rituals, from childhood to marriage in the life of his nephew/niece. For example, a maternal uncle after taking the child of his sister in the arms, circumambulates the holy fire during the first Hoiy festival and marks a *tilak* on the forehead in the belief that evil spirits will not do any harm to the child. He maintains close relationship with them throughout their life. Generally, he takes initiative in searching a mate for his nephew/niece and plays a leading role from engagement to marriage, besides presenting gifts of clothes, one or two ornaments etc. called *mameru/mosal*. Similarly, father's sister called *fui* names the child of her brother and throws the hairs of nephew into the river when the first male child undergoes *mundan* (tonsure) at the shrine of the clan deity. She may be rewarded suitably by her brother for the role she plays.

Quite a few communities have given up the practice of feeding entire community or village on the eve of final death ritual. However, Barad of Kutch still perform *charia* (death ritual) by feeding entire community within one to four years of death of a family member. It is customary for the Hindus to cremate the dead but in general infants are buried while the adults are cremated. Generally they observe death pollution for twelve days. *Tishra* (mourning ceremony), *Barma* (shradh) and the *Mundan* (tonsure) are the important rituals related to death.

People mostly used to live in extended family. This family type is now being replaced with the nuclear type of family due to economic compulsion and migration. The main principle of inheritance is equigeniture among the sons. The disabilities in respect of inheritance and succession from which women suffered in the past have been removed to some extent. They get a share in the ancestral property and sometimes succeed as head of the

family where there is no adult son. This has introduced fundamental changes in the status of women.

Village communities and social control : There are 18114 inhabited villages in the state, according to 1981 Census (Series -5 Gujarat Col. 1981) and most of them are multi-community villages. These villages have not only the members of same religion (12.6%) but also most of other religions (59.8%).

The communities have caste councils locally called *jati panch* among the Hindus and *jamat* among the Muslims. Almost every community has its own council consisting of its own community members, who prevent any infringement of social norms. The council also enforces the social norms. The persons violating the norms are punished, compensation is paid to the aggrieved, punitive feast is held or ostracization is ordered in a severe case. Among the Muslims their *jamat* looks after the social aspect and punishes the offenders by imposing fines, which are utilised for the maintenance of the mosque and feeding the poor and needy. Almost all Muslim communities, particularly small communities (for example Vagher, Bhodala, Sipai Jamat) and also Shia Muslims have their own *jamat* which promotes communal solidarity particularly by enforcing kinship regulations and marriage within the community. Depending upon the size and areas of distribution, style of functioning of the *jamat* varies from one community to other. A few Shia Muslim communities have well organized *jamat* at local, regional and even beyond national level. This is a special feature of Muslim communities of Gujarat.

Within the democratic framework and modern political system the councils still perform their roles to maintain social harmony, resolve disputes, and to preserve the ritual status.

Beliefs and Practices : The percentage of the followers of Hinduism according to 1981 census is 89.53 per cent compared to 82.63 per cent at the national level, Muslims constitute 8.53 against 11.36 per cent at the national level, Christians 0.39 per cent against national average 2.43 per cent, Buddhists 0.02 per cent against 0.71 per cent, Jains 1.37 per cent against 0.48 per cent, Sikhs 0.07 per cent against 1.96 per cent and 'other religious' 0.05 per cent against 0.42 per cent.

The state is predominantly Hindu having various sects like the Shivite, Vaishnavite, Shakta etc. Besides the above traditional

sects, many modern movements and sects, the Moksha Margi Satnam, Dharma Sena Sangh, Swami Narayan Sect and Arya Samaj sects have been able to make a dent in the life of the people of Gujarat. Vaishnavism has several cults. For example Vaishnav sampradaya of Vallabhacharya sect exists among communities such as Lohar, Kadia, Khadayata, Vania, Khavas, Koli, Kathi. Krishna panthis exist among various groups of Ahirs. Some of Kachchias, Maru Vankars etc. are the followers of Kabir. Quite a few people from Kathi, Kharva, Meghwal, Khatik etc. follow Ramdevpir cult.

The Swaminarayan movement initially founded by Ramanand which drew inspiration from the Vaishnavite doctrines was further developed by Sahjanand in the 19th century who sought to protect it from corrupting influences. He believed in one God and established a new order of the *sadhus*. People in large number, became *satsangis* and shunned non-vegetarianism, alcoholism, adultery etc. Some of the communities in Gujarat like the Od and Thori have been influenced by the Swaminarayan sect and are taking to vegetarianism and abstinence from liquor. Among the Bhils also, some sections are the followers of the Swaminarayan sect, Kabirpanthi, Dadupanthi, Nanakpanthi, Ramdasi and Mahadeo panth.

Swaminarayan Panth is effective among many other communities such as Jadeja Rajput, Lohana, Kadva Patel, Jethi, Karadia Rajput, Kathi, Modh Brahmans etc. inhabiting Kutch, Saurashtra and other parts of Gujarat. They observe fast on the eleventh day of bright fortnight and *amavasya* of all months.

Likewise, Durgaram Mancharam Dave, a Nagar Brahman, established Manav Dharam Sabha in 1843. He tried to reinterpret Hindu religion in the light of the ancient scriptures and started the Sabha to contain the growing impact of Christianity. These reformist activities were later carried out by reformers like Narmad Shankar Lal, Karsandas Mulji, Satya Prakash and many others who joined the mission. These, atleast, helped the low castes to change their caste status.

Quite a few people from almost all communities have become the followers of Swadhayaya Parivar of Shri Pandurang Shastry of Bombay who believe in universal brotherhood and advise against the practice of untouchability. The followers of Swadhayaya Parivar

do not observe rigidity in commensal norms and try to abstain from drinking liquor and eating of non-vegetarian food. Some people in the communities such as Kalal, Kambodia Bhagat, Kamalia, Kangasia, Kapadi, Maruvankar etc. are *shakthi upasak* i.e. followers of Shakthi cult.

Shaivites are present in good numbers among communities like Kanphatia (Nath Bawa), Karadia Rajput, Nadoda Rajput etc. The impact of Amba Mata is seen among tribals and non-tribals particularly inhabiting the districts of Sabarkantha and Banaskantha besides Maru Vankar and Mang Kotwalia of the state. Tribes like Dhodia and Naika worship Jalaram Bapa of Virpur and give up drinking toddy/liquor atleast for a few months, when their wishes are fulfilled in that particular year.

The Muslims of Gujarat are divided into two distinct sects. The Shia followers consist of the Bohra Muslims and the Khojas. This sect does not follow Islamic calender. They follow the Lunar calender which was prepared in Egypt by the ruling Amils. They do not recognise the first three successors of the Prophet as the Sunnis do. They regard only Hazarat Ali, the fourth and "real successor" and son-in-law of Prophet Hazarat Muhammad. The Sunni follow Islamic calender called Hijri calender. A majority of the Muslim communities of Gujarat belong to the Sunni sect. They recognise all the four successors in order of Hazarat Abubakkar Siddiqui, Umar Faruk, Usman Gani and Hazarat Ali after the death of prophet Hazarat Muhammed. The Sunni Muslims have four major groups - Saiyad, Sheikh, Mogul and Pathan. A number of occupational groups also exist among the Sunni namely - Memon, Mansoori, Rangrez, Qureshi, Fakir, Ghanchi etc. Most of them are Hindu converts. Maulavi and Quazi are the sacred specialists employed by the Sunni Muslim communities on religious and ritual occasions.

The Jain communities of Gujarat occupy the third position in terms of its followers in Gujarat. The Jain have two major sections - (a) Svetambaras - monks who put on white cloth and are traditionalist (b) Digambaras - the monks who move about naked and are more liberal than the former.

There are a few Christian communities having two divisions (a) Catholic - the traditionalist (b) Protestant - the reformists. There are Parsis (0.3%) in Gujarat, who are the followers of Zoroastrian

religion and are fire worshippers. The Jews who constitute a negligible percentage are the followers of Moses of the Old Testament. There are Sikhs (0.3%) in Gujarat. Their sacred centre is Akal Takht Sahib at Amritsar where their main gathering is held during the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak and Guru Govind Singh.

Gujarat is dominated by the 'Vaishnavites'. This is due to the abode of Lord Krishan being in Gujarat at Dwaraka in Saurashtra region. Many religious movements have penetrated from neighbouring states i.e. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. People have been influenced by the leadership of saints like Tukaram, who is said to be friend of Lord Sri Krishna's. Though there is a distinct trend of Vaishnavism, with its emphasis on vegetarianism, Brahmanical influence is evident in the stratification of caste groups, observance of rigidity in accepting food, water etc.

Many socio-religious practices are observed in common by the communities of Gujarat. For instance, the Me/Meta also known as Wadha Koli of Kutch district inhabiting Banni area have been observing both Islam and Hindu rites in the performance of marriage rituals. Naming pattern is also a mixture of Hindu and Muslim features. Molesalam Girasia, a dominant agricultural community of Vadodara and Kheda districts still follow Rajput pattern of naming. They follow Hindu Rajput rituals like performing *manik thumb* (which is equivalent to *Ganeshsthapana* of Hindu religion). They observe clan exogamy besides hierarchy within clans in mate selection. Similarly Malik, another agricultural based Muslim community is giving up the practice of erecting *samda ki dhali* in front of bride's and groom's houses when Rajputs stopped giving their daughter in marriage to them. The Athia panthi (also called Andheria division) of Kachchia still mourn during Moharram month besides observing fast during the entire month of Ramzan with one meal a day. They are called Pirana panthi also. The Qazis of Surendranagar taken part in local fairs and festivals of Hindus and even observe fast on *satam* (seventh day) and *attam* (eight day) of Sharavan month. Kanthiwala Lohars observe Holi and Diwali festivals of Hindu religion.

Since Gujarat was ruled by Muslim rulers for about 400 years, the influence of Muslim rule on the life of Gujarati people is

evident. These influences have given birth to several Muslim groups of Indian origin, mostly from the lower ladder of Hindu society. Though these converted groups, have accepted the Islam and its ethics, they still practise some of the traditional modes of belief. They still maintain some kind of hierarchical order among themselves though their accepted religion is based on the notion of equality.

*Fairs and Festivals*_: There are a number of festivals celebrated by the people of Gujarat, which symbolise their cultural, social and religious identity. In fact, festivals held on special days and during various seasons, are so designed as to ensure individual joy and societal and domestic happiness. They are also connected with agricultural operations.

The principal festival of the Hindus which is observed by almost all the castes or classes in the state are - (a) *Diwali* or *Deepavali*, appropriately known as Festival of Lamps. It is both the climax and commencement of the yearly cycle of festivals, marking the close of the old year and ushering in of the new year. *Dhan Terash* is dedicated to the worship of Laxmi, goddess of wealth, Diwali is celebrated by all and sundry on the *amavasya* of Kartika. The day is very important to merchants, who close their annual accounts on this day and open new account books with traditional worship of Laxmi and Sharda. During this festival, homes are decorated and made clean and tidy. Lamps (*deepmalas*) are lighted in every house with different designs at the entrance doors and crackers are fired at night. Diwali is a harvest festival coming at the end of the *kharif* season. On the day, the *annakutta* (offering of all possible varieties of food, sweets fruits and vegetables prepared from fresh arrivals) is arranged for propitiating the gods.

The day on which the sun enters the orbit of Capricorn, *Makar Sankranti* is celebrated. On this day, cows are worshipped in the morning and fed with boiled bajri or jowar known as *ghughri*. Foodgrains are distributed to the poor and needy. The day has a special significance to the agriculturists, as by *Makar Sankranti*, the Kharif crops are harvested and brought home.

The Holi is celebrated as the festival of the spraying of colours by the young and the old alike. It is an ancient festival held at a time when the rabi crops like wheat, gram, cotton, til are harvested and brought to the market. The Holi fire is lighted at night in

every village or town and worshipped by all, it is called as *holi ka dahan*. The actual holi or *dhuleti*, celebrated next day by spraying colours and indulging in fun and revelry. Men, women and children all in a hilarious mood throw colour at each other.

The celebration of Shri Krishna's birthday which falls on the eighth of the second half of Shravan is known as Janmasthami. This festival has special significance for Dwarka, which was the adopted home and capital of Lord Krishna. Devout Vaishnavas observe fast for the whole day. A good number of fairs are held on this day at various places of the state.

Sravan punam (full moon day, in the Hindu month of Sravan) is an important festival. Rakshabandan or Rakhi is the festival of brothers and sisters. Sisters tie threads of Rakhi round the wrists of their brothers expressing all their affection and good wishes. They offer them sweetmeats and coconuts and receive gifts from their brothers.

The *Navratri* or the festival of nine nights, begins on the first day of *Ashvin* and spreads over nine days. It is relating to the mother goddess, whose ten manifestations are described in *Markandeya Purana*. The goddess is worshipped daily during these days and earthen pots pierced with numerous holes containing a light called *garbo*, are kept near the image of the goddess. The lamp is kept burning throughout the night and during the entire *navratri* period. Prayers and *garbas* in praise of the goddess are sung by devotees. On the ninth day of the festival, the *havan* ceremony is performed and *naivadya* (food offering) offered to the goddess and its *prasad* is distributed.

The *Navratri* festival is immediately followed by Dassera festival. It is also called the Vijyadashmi or the tenth day of victory, as it commemorates the victory of Rama over Ravana. It is also believed that on this day goddess Durga killed the demon Mahishasur after a nine day battle. Vijaya Dashmi is thus the day of victory of good over evil and is considered an auspicious day to start any new work.

Besides these, there are other festivals like - Shivaratri, Ram Navami, Basant Panchami, Ganesh Chaturathi, Nag Panchami, Sitla Satam etc. which are mainly observed by the followers of the respective sects.

Both Shias and the Sunnis celebrate Muharram, Ramjan and

Bakri-Id festivals. In the beginnig of Muslim calendar year, comes the month of Muharram, which is held by the Shias in special veneration as being the month in which Imam Hussain, the son of Ali was sacrificed. The *Bada-Wafat*, *Sabebarat*, *Id-Ul-Fitr* commonly know as Ramjan Id and *Id- Ul- Zoha* also called Bakrid are other major festivals observed.

The Jain festivals are generally associated with austerity, worship and fasting. The Jain devotees are required to avoid, in addition to roots, which are prohibited on ordinary days, leafy vegetables, dry fruits, tasty food preparations, milk and curds and in some cases even water, when severe austerities and penance are observed. Jainism lays emphasis on *tap* or penance as a means of earning religious merit. The principal Jain festivals are the *Oli* (*Siddha Chakra Puja*), *Kartik Purnima* and *Mahavir Jayanti*. The Christians, the Buddhists have the festivals like *Christmas* and *Buddha Purnima* respectively.

There are popular sports like kiteflying which involves people cutting across faiths. Huge colourful kites are flown by even adult people so much so that making kite has become a cottage industry.

Oral Tradition : In Gujarat as in the other part of India, culture is closely interlinked with religion. It has been the basis of all cultural activities, in the field of , literature, architecture, painting and music.

Gujarat has also a vibrant folk tradition including folklore, folk-dance (*Ras*, *Garbi*, *Garba*), bhajan and kirtan. Gujarat has given some of the best musicians to India, such as Baiju Bavara, Jana Riri of Anartpur (Bhavnagar) who, according to tradition is reported to have saved the life of Tansen from the burning effect of the *Deepak rag* by singing *rag Malhar*. The poet saint Narsinha Mehta wrote the famous bhajan 'Vaishnabhajan'. In modern times Ustad Faiyaz Khan, Mulabux, the Veena player Rahimkhan and many others belong to Gujarat. Of all parts of India, Gujarat alone can claim to have the distinction of having preserved the ancient tradition of song, dance and drama. The best known of these are *Ras* and *Garba*. The folk drama in Gujarat is known as *Bhawai*. Most of these traditions trace their origin to the ancient period of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna from his boyhood was a flute player and great dancer who thrilled people and enlivened

the environment of Gokul and Vrindavan. When he became the ruler of Dwarka in Gujarat, he not only distinguished himself as a brave fighter, but also developed his love for dance and music. Since then folk dances have become a part of the life of the people of Gujarat, preserved in their pristine glory. *Ras* dance is considered to be a form of *Ras lila*, which Krishna used to perform, when he was a cow-herd at Gokul and Vrindavan. It is a very simple dance, generally performed by a group of youthful people who move in a circle to measured steps, marking time by *dandi* (stick), holding hands. With the dance they sing chorus accompanied by drum, cymbals, and flute. The typical folk costume for this dance is *keddia* (small coat) with tight sleeves and pleated frilles at the waist with embroidered borders and shoulders; tight trousers like *churidars* and colourfully embroidered cap or turbans and coloured *rumal* (handkerchief). Lord Krishna is credited to have popularised the form - *lasya nritya* which came to be known as the *garba* dance. It is a simple circular movement of dance performed by womenfolk. The other popular form of folk dances in Gujarat are *pippani nritya*, Siddi dance called *dhamal padhar nritya*, *dangi nritya* and some typical tribal dances. The folk dances are performed on the occasion of Navratri, Sarad-Purnima, Janamashtami, Makar Sankrant, Basant Panchami and during some other local festivals.

There are folk dances which are specific to communities. For instance during Holi festival both male and female dance a typical number called *gher* to the tune of traditional music. Folk dance of female Bhopa Rabari is called *siya* which is specific to that community. Similarly Depala female perform the *jarki* dance during marriage rituals and also during Navratri dance. *Danda ras*, *Garba* dance are not specific to any community but are region specific. A large number of communities have folk tales regarding their origin and migration. The folk songs however are region specific rather than restricted to individual communities. Some communities have been practising crafts specific to them. The Khatri and Brahma Kshatri are famous for their *bandhini* (tie and dye). However *bharat ka kam* (embroidery) of Kutch is not specific to any community but region specific which is continued by many communities of Kutch. The Kamalia practise floor painting and wall paintings with sacred markings.

Inter-community Linkages : In Saurashtra as mentioned above, there is a category of thirteen communities called *Thera Tasiri* (literally means 13 castes) who may take food from the same bowl. They are Rajput, Darbar groups (Hati, Kathi, Naroda Rajput, Maiya etc.), four castes of artisans viz. Kumbhar, Lohar, Suthar and Soni and Maldhari (shepherded communities) of Bharward, Rabari and Charan as well as Ghedia Koli. They accept/exchange food and water. The Maru Kumbhars and Patel (who practise cultivation as their means of livelihood) living in Surendranagar and Nakhatrana taluka of Kutch district still retain jajmani system. They give 50 kgs of paddy twice in a year (i.e. after each harvest) as payment in kind for the services rendered by the *kamni* castes like Suthar, Lohar, Kumbhar, Dhobi, Valand and Chamar. These serving and artisan communities have a fixed number of houses where they go and serve them.

If a Rajput girl has no brother, then she can take a brother/s from other communities atleast before her marriage which is known as *jethutalya bhai* or *welbhai*. These ritual brothers have to give some gifts during *kholobharvani* (lap filling) ceremony.

As in the other parts of the country, inter-caste relations were restricted by the notion of purity and pollution. Members of different castes maintained distances in such matters as inter-dining and inter-caste marriage. The picture has greatly changed especially since independence. Inter-dining is no longer looked down upon though restriction still persists in a diluted form in rural areas.

Under the influence of social and economic development and spread of education, traditional constraints are being eroded. Marriages have begun to take place within prohibited degrees. Time consumed by the elaborate marriage ceremonies is being curtailed, the accent being on spending more time and money on reception and ostentation. Secondly, widow re-marriages, which were originally prevalent among some castes only, are on the increase among the middle and higher classes, as a result of the divorce law, change in the attitude towards marriage and economic independence of women due to spread of education. The custom of levirate still continues among some lower castes. Thirdly, as regards expenditure, the castes and classes, which have become rich indulge in conspicuous consumption, whereas those

particularly the middle class people, restrict this expenditure as far as possible. Lastly, the marriage bonds are loosened not only by divorce law but as the girls gain economic independence. However, caste councils/associations are trying to restrict divorce cases as well as polygamy. By and large, the attitude towards marriage is undergoing rapid change and a tendency is developing to treat marriage more as a contract rather than a sacrament.

The state has a good number of communities from other states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu etc. All these groups living in the state maintain their culture and tradition.

The tribals are also playing an important part in politics and culture of Gujarat. There are five tribal groups identified as primitive groups of the state, such as Kolcha Kolghas, Kotwalia, Kathodia, Padhars and Siddis. The concentration of these aboriginal groups in north-eastern, south-eastern and southern borders of the state comprises Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Panchmahal, Vadodra, Bharuch, Surat, Valsad and Dangs. The primitive groups prefer to live in the forest or along its fringes. They keep themselves comparatively in isolation from other communities. These aboriginals call themselves the son of soil. Their economy is mostly dependent on the forest produce. The tribals are concentrated on the border region of the state. Only Siddi - a tribal group residing in Gir forest claim to be the descendant of Negroid group of Africa. These groups have embraced Islam under the influence of Muslim ruler of Junagadh. They are still maintaining their cultural identity without much influence of modernization etc. Tribal groups are also taking an active part in the making of present day Gujarat. Such groups as Dhodia and Choudhury have been participating in the mainstream activities. They revolted against the land grabbing of Mahajan and abstained from taking liquor. Amar Singh Choudhury of the Choudhury tribal group became the Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat.

Industrialization has spread its tentacles in this state. It is the major textile producing area of Indian sub-continent. Besides textiles, the new industries are based on chemicals, petrochemicals, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, drugs and engineering units of multiple types. Gujarat, today is a major producer of

inorganic chemicals such as soda ash and caustic soda as well as chemical fertilizers. It has the largest petrochemical complex in the country. Food products and agro-based industries have also developed fast. Sugar, vanaspati oil, baby food are major among them. Availability of high-graded lime stone has led to the development of cement industry. Engineering industries, electronics and pharmaceuticals have also developed rapidly.

Development : There is a rich tradition of welfare work done among the tribals of Gujarat. Nullifying Elwin's concept based on his study of the Baiga, P.G. Shah firmly put forward his argument for bringing the tribal segment into the mainstream of Indian populations. The Gandhian model influenced a number of social workers. Action oriented work was conducted under the inspiring leadership of A.V. Thakkar and his Bhil Seva Mandal. This provided a model for the welfare policies of the tribals in the country. L.M. Srikant and other social workers worked out to bring about directed change. They evolved an indigenous strategy for developing the backward sections.

Overview of Ethnographic Literature : Gujarat constitutes a composite cultural region made up of the tribal and non-tribal communities. The ethnographic study in Gujarat started from year 1876. Although from the beginning tribal groups received special attention, minority communities, caste communities etc were also studied. Most of the socially, educationally backward class communities were ignored in such studies in the beginning.

The earliest work relating to Gujarat was on the "Bhil in the Dangs" by Gibbs (1876). Sherring (1879) provided some information about the tribes and castes of Kutch and Gujarat. The Department of Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency (1899-1901) played an important role in generating information about the communities of the state. Enthoven's *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay* in 3 volumes also provided the ethnographic description of the communities of Gujarat.

Four journals played a vital role in publishing the information relating to the communities of the state. The *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, published papers on subjects such as (i) "Shepherds Wedding", Campbell (1895-1899); (ii). "A glossary of Castes, Tribes and Races in Baroda state" - Desai (1917-1921); (iii) "Rabaries of Kathiawar Markad" (1938-39). The

Journal of University of Bombay contained papers on subjects such as (i) "A note on the cross-cousin marriage and dual Organisation in Kathiwar" Ghurye (1936-1937); "Economic life of an aboriginal tribe of Gujarat, Mehta 1934; "Gayan tribal community of south Gujarat" - D.P. Khanapurkar (1946-47). *The Journal of Gujarat Research Socceity* carried papers on the subjects such as (i) "Bhil - the earliest inhabitants of Gujarat" - P.G. Shah (1942); (ii) Bhil of Gujarat - D.N. Majumdar (1942); (iii) "Racial Analysis of Bhil" - D.N. Majumdar (1944). The *Journal of M.S. University Baroda* brought out papers on the tribes like Bhil by Y.V.S. Nath - 1953, 1954. A vernacular journal *Gujarat Ki Adivasi*, published a number of papers related to tribes and castes of the state. In fact considrable enthographic emerged in Gujarati from 1850 onwards.

Besides these, the journals like *Modern Review* (1927) published a long paper on "Bhil in historical setting" by M.P.N. Mazumdar. The *Economic Weekly* published a paper on Bhil of Ratanmal Village and local communities by Y.V.S. Nath (1954).

The first handbook on the Jat, Gujarat and Ahir was prepared by Bingley (1904). The first monograph on the Dublas, by P.G. Shah was an ethnographic study of the tribe highlighting the changes that took place in Dubla society. P.G. Shah (1959) also wrote a second monograph, "Naikas - Naikdas". This was followed by a monograph on the Bhil by Y.V.S. Nath (1960).

The Census organisation of Gujarat produced several reports which contained a note on some communities.

The early mention of these groups was made by Campbell, and Bingley. This was followed by extensive writings on the Bhils by D.N. Majumdar. Campbell also wrote on the shepherd communities of the peninsular part. Ghurye wrote on the cross-cousin marriaage and dual organisation in Kathiawar. Khanapurkar and Mehta also wrote on tribes of the state. The Gujarat Research Society established by P.G. Shah made valuable contributions to the understanding of the tribal cultures of Gujarat. Shah in his book *Tribal Life in Gujarat* (1964) extensively dealt with the tribal groups of the tribal zone. There are full fledged monographs on the tribal groups like, Dubla (Shah), Naika (Shah), Bhil (Naik, Nath), Choudhary (Mehta). Majumdar, in addition to cultural studies also conducted physical anthropological researches. He published

a couple of papers in the *Journal of Gujarat Research Society* and brought out the book *Race Elements in Gujarat*.

The works of Ghurye, Shah and Majumdar provided a strong foundation for tribal studies in Gujarat. Y.V.S. Nath in his study of Bhil (Bhils of Ratanmal) described the tribe as a heterogenous group comprising a number of originally distinct tribes. Nath also referred to shifting cultivation giving the details of mode of cultivation, crop cycle etc.

I.P.Desai, Arvind Shah, James Silverberg, T.B.Naik and others have dealt with the non-tribal communities. There are valuable studies on various castes of Gujarat. Several studies came up under the guidance of Prof. M.N. Srinivas at M .S. University, Baroda. There are studies by A.R. Desai, Neera Desai, Ghanshyam Shah, dealing with various aspects of the castes in Gujarat. Besides, there are a large number of publications available in Gujarati published by various scholars.

Jan Breman (1974), Glatter Augusta (1969), Kopper Wilhelm (1976), made important contributions to the understanding of tribal life in Gujarat during the period from 1967-77. Fisher and Haku Shah's (ed) work on *Chodhris's* loin cloth is a pioneering effort. Among the Ph.D. dissertations on the tribals of Gujarat mention may be made of the accounts on Dhodias (Solanki, A.N., 1955, 1976) and Bhils (Jethwa, 1964). In the decade under review a study in kinship system of Rabaris of Gir forest in Saurashtra has been completed by Asha Solanki (1973) and the same aspect has been studied by Siddharaj Solanki (1974) for his own tribe - "The Garasias of Shamlaji" in north Gujarat.

At all India level, publications of the 1961 census (e.g. Mitra A., 1966, Roy Burman (1968 etc.) contain basic information on the tribals of Gujarat.

About 50 publications stand to the credit of the Tribal Research and Training Institute, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad. These include a short descriptive account of the tribal life of Gujarat. The Centre for Social Studies, Surat have produced many publications on the tribal life and development processes in Gujarat.

Eberherd Fisher and Haku Shah's *Mogra Dev - Tribal Crocodile Gods* (1971) published by Gujarat Vidyapith provides information on various aspects of tribal life in considerable details. Eberherd Fisher and Haku Shah's *Vetre Khamba - Memorial for the dead*

(1973) again published by Gujarat Vidyapith contains information about the stylistic features, and the local significance of a little known piece of tribal art.

Other scholars include Behramji, M. Malabari who wrote *Gujarat and the Gujaratis*. Ashgar Ali Engineer's *The Muslim Communities of Gujarat* (1989) is a microstudy of three distinct but small Muslim communities - Bohras, Memons and Khojas, all business communities, Bohras and Khojas "tightly controlled".

The Tribal Research and Training Institute, Gujarat Vidyapith has published a number of reports on tribal development.

Under the People of India project launched on 2 October, 1985 all communities of presentday Gujarat were taken up for study. Information was collected in terms of a 15 point format. The Western Regional Centre of Anthropological Survey of India at Udaipur collaborated with Tribal Research and Training Institute of Gujarat Vidyapeeth and Centre for Social Studies, South Gujarat University, Surat and with a number of local scholars. A number of workshops and many rounds of discussions were organised to discuss and analyse the material generated by the Project. In all 290 communities including the Maharashtra in Gujarat were identified for study in this state. Some communities including those studied in different regions in Gujarat have been merged, bringing down the total of the communities studied finally to 286.

ABDAL

The Abdal are "lawful" beggars who beg in the name of God, beating one end of a drum and singing religious songs. Abdals are also identified as Dafalis, Fadalis, Nagarchi and recognize themselves as Maink-aid-Surasat Fakir. Abdal are distributed in 47 villages. Their main concentration is in Ahmedabad city. The 1891 Census mentioned that there were 240 Abdals in Gujarat. They speak in Arabi and Urdu among their own kin but in Gujarati with outsiders. The community is identified by their *daflis* (drums with one open end). They are a religious minority.

They Abdal are non-vegetarians who eat beef but not pork. Cereals like jawar, rice, wheat and pulses are their staple food. They take available vegetables. Fruits are consumed only on special occasions. Some members have developed a habit of consuming alcoholic drinks, which they procure from the local market. They consume tea along with the family members atleast twice a day. But take milk only occasionally. Smoking *bidis* or cigarettes is common among the male members of the community. The Abdal consider themselves as Fakirs and so superior to other Muslims. Other Muslim communities consider them inferior in social status.

The Abdal are an endogamous community. They practise adult marriage where marriage age for girls is 18 years and 21 years for boys. As they preferred child marriage in the past, marriage negotiations are made at an early age. They practise both cross-cousin and parallel-cousin marriages. The mode of acquiring a spouse is through negotiation and monogamous marriage is the norm. The marriage symbol is *Thali* (Chori). *Mehar* amount is promised at the time of marriage. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. *Talak* (divorce) and remarriage (*natra*) are permitted in the society. Remarriage of a divorcee or a widow take place after three months of divorce or widowhood.

Nuclear families are predominant. There are instances also of extended and broken families. Joking relationship exists between the grandchildren and grandparents. Married women enjoy joking

relationship with her husband's younger brothers or sisters and male members of her husband's are group.

The Abdal women have no right of inheritance. They earn by taking part in begging alms or sewing dresses from the old garments and selling those. They look after the household duties besides collecting fuel etc.

In case of first pregnancy, a woman is considered sacred. Protective measures are taken against the evil eye of others by following the directions of a *pir* or local medicine man. The first delivery takes place in her natal house attended by a local *dai* (midwife). The *dai* announces the sex of the child after calling on a bamboo winnowing fan. A piece of new red cloth is encircled around the baby's head, so as to hear the prayer call. Black-thread is tied around the child's wrists and ankles to guard him from the evil eye after the first bath. *Chatti* is performed on the sixth day and name is given on the early morning. The local *mulla* selects the name for the child. On the seventh or fourteenth or twenty first day after birth, they perform the rites of *aqiqa*, in which child's head is shaved by a *hazam* (muslim barber). Pollution for a child is observed for twelve days, where as for the mother it is for forty days. At the age of six or seven circumcision (*khatna*) is performed by arranging a feast.

Marriage negotiations are conducted by the elders of the family. In the *ubatha* ceremony the women of the family sing songs, rub the bride or bridegroom with gram flour mixed with oil and turmeric and then a knife or any other sharp iron instrument and a lemon are given to the bride or bridegroom which she or he has to keep carefully till the ritual bath on the marriage day. *Barat* or *jan* (marriage procession) is received by the bride's family with due respect. Nikah is conducted by the Qazi or his deputy. The guests bless the marriage union after the recording of marriage procedures. At dawn, the bride's face for the first time is shown to the bridegroom in a mirror. Consummation rite is held at her father-in-law's house. She returns to her parental home after five days. Later on she goes back to her father-in-law's house and starts a new life.

It is considered good to die on a Thursday or Friday or any day in the month of holy Ramjan. If the death occurs at night, the body is buried in the early morning of the following day. The body

is laid on a bier, lifted on shoulders and carried to burial ground by the relatives and friends. They are buried in their graveyard or in the family burial ground. No food is cooked in the house of the deceased till the third day. Friends and relatives of the deceased send cooked food. In the morning of the third day, *ziarat* is held. Relatives, friends and other assemble in the mosque where each of them reads a chapter of the holy Koran for the eternal peace of the departed soul and arrange the first feast. Again on the fortieth day, and after fourth, sixth, ninth month and the last day of the first year, the family of the deceased give a dinner to their kinsmen in memory of the dead man.

Begging is their traditional and holy occupation. Through begging, they not only collect the alms but they pray to God (Allah) through the beating of drums (*daflī*) and give benefits to those families who gives alms to them. The sound of the *daflī* played by an Abdal is regarded as auspicious, as they belong to the legal *basara* order of beggars. Selling of *attar* (perfume), *surma* (eyetex which is used for eyes) are their other occupations. Traditionally they were linked by some form of *jajmani* relationship within the village. They sing songs in the name of Allah (God) in the morning, during holy Ramjan when Muslims observe fast during the day. The Abdals with their *daflis* singing awaken the villagers. They are provided a lumpsum in cash or grain by each family in the village. Children below the age of 15 also beg, but some younger members of the community are taking to manual labour. They perceive that changing the traditional occupation of *daflī* beating to manual labour is unacceptable to Allah.

They have Abdal Samaj (traditional caste council) with one president. The *Samaj* controls the affairs of the community with regard to marriage, divorce, remarriage etc. Earlier the senior most member of the community was the president but in recent times they like to hand over the charge to an educated man. They are Sunnis. As a religious group they invoke charms etc. to eradicate evil and to protect the community. They would like to perform the *Haj* and they have great reverence for Ajmer Sharif. Many members of the community seek their attestic expression through their traditional songs or *kalma* which they recite to the tune of the *daflī*.

An Abdal is identified as Fakir. They have inter-community

linkages. Since this community maintains its tradition through begging, singing songs in the name of god, supplying *attar* (perfume), *surma* (*kajal*) to the people of all communities including Hindus, they are respected by the other communities for their profession. They take nominal money to cure diseases. They accept food and water from the hands of all communities. Few other communities accept water from their hands except the Muslims.

The Abdal do not have a favourable attitude towards education, and family planning. They mostly live in a slum or unhygienic areas where facilities for drinking water, electricity, communication and other welfare measures are more or less absent.

N.K. Ghatak

AGARIA

The Agaria derive their name from Agra city. According to the Agaria's oral account, they belonged to Hindi belt and were inhabitants of Agra town under a Muslim Jagirdar during the period of Mughal regime. The son of the jagirdar was notorious, characterless who used to capture women of Agaria community. The practice enraged the Agaria people and they in their high temper killed him. The ruler of Agra immediately confined most of the community people and ordered to cut their palms. But Muje Firsad, grandson of Khaja Moinuddin Chisti of Ajmer, saved their lives and were converted to Islam and they migrated to Kutch through Ahmedabad. They are concentrated in a few villages including Bhuj, Matra, Mandvi and Lohario.

The mother tongue of the Agaria is the Kachchi dialect spoken within the community as well as in relation to others. They also speak Gujarati and Hindi and use the Gujarati script.

The Agaria are non-vegetarians. Bajra and *gehu* (wheat) are, their staple cereals, occasionally supplemented by rice. They consume meat, fish, egg, etc. but abstain from beef. Palmolin oil along with groundnut oil is the cooking medium. Fruits, root and tubers consumed occasionally. Milk is given to children. Tea and coffee are the main beverages. Milk products such as *dahi* (curd), *chach* (buttermilk) and *ghce* are taken. Men occasionally consume liquor. They also smoke *bidi* and cigarette and are also fond of chewing betel and tobacco. They prepare various kinds of special dishes, such as *suji*, *laddu*, *sira*, *shayai* etc. on festive occasions.

The Agarias are an endogamous community. Social divisions are indicated by the (surnames) *ataks* such as Lulatar, Bayotmona, Agiotar, Makatar, Admotar, Pilatar, Buburia, Dadoria, Taravia etc. All these *ataks* enjoy equal status. Every Agaria suffixes their *atak* as his surname. The Agarias practise *atak* exogamy. Parallel cousin marriages are allowed. Monogamy is the rule but polygyny is resorted to in case of barrenness. Junior sororate marriage is also practised. Earlier tradition of pre-puberty marriage has yielded

to post-puberty marriage. Marriageable age for girls varies between 16-18 while for boys it ranges from 20-22 years. Marital alliances are arranged by parents and elders of the family. *Kan ka sheeri* (earring) *nak ka sheeri* (nose stud) and *patti* (anklet) are the symbols of a married woman. The bridegroom's father gives a few ornaments and utensils to the bride and her parents. Post-marital residence is patrilocal. Divorce is permitted and granted at the instance of the Agaria Jamat. When divorce takes place the father acquires custody of children but in the case of infants the mother has rights of custody. Both widow and widower remarriage are prevalent in the community.

Nuclear family has endured over the vertically extended family. Most of the married sons live separately. Only youngest married son lives with his old parents. Joking relations is permitted between grand parents and grand children. There is avoidance relation between a man and his sister-in-law (younger brother's wife). All sons get equal share of the parent's property. Daughters have no right to ancestral property. The eldest son becomes the head of the family on the death of his father. Inter-family bonds among the Agaria is also cordial.

The Agaria women have a low status in comparison to men in all aspects of life. However, they participate in all the social functions along with their children, and menfolk. Young women are not allowed to go outside the village. Women are mainly engaged in household jobs such as cooking, child rearing, collection of fuel and fetching water etc. In political sphere, participation of women is strictly restricted.

A few families of Agaria observe pre-delivery ritual locally known as *satmasa*, performed in the seventh month of pregnancy, for the safety of foetus and for normal delivery. The expectant mother is taken to her father's house for the first delivery. Child birth takes place at home, with the help of experienced *dais* (midwife) from other Muslim communities like the Kumbhar, Momin etc. If there are complications, the expectant mother is rushed to hospital. Birth pollution is observed for thirty days. The naming ceremony is performed five days after the birth, officiated by a *moulavi*. On the seventh or fourteenth or twenty first day after a child birth. Aqqa is performed for male child alongwith tousure head and on that occasion, two goats are sacrificed of two goats. Khatna

(circumcision) of one to two years old male child is performed by a Hajam.

Betrothal ceremony is performed before marriage in which the groom's party visits the bride's house with ornaments, clothes and sweets and are offered with a few pieces of coconut, molasses and light refreshment like *sharbat* or tea, biscuit, sweets etc. A few months later, the groom's party presents the bride's dress. Marriage (*nikah*) ceremony take place before the Moharrum festival at the bride's residence officiated by a *moulavi*. Traditionally the Agaria community has a fixed amount of *mehar* (dower) of Rs.250/- which is paid instantly during *nikah* (marriage). A grand feast is arranged by the bride's parents on this occasion. The consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's residence.

The dead are buried (*dafan*) in their own graveyard. In case of children, they observe mourning period for three days and for an adult it (*chalisa*) is observed for forty days. No food is cooked for three days in the house of the deceased. Relatives or villagers send cooked food. *Ziarat* is observed on the third day. The wife of the deceased remains within the four walls of the house for forty days, and removes her symbols of marriage.

The Agaria are traditionally cultivators. Most of the families own a good amount of land, though a few of them also earn their livelihood by working as agricultural labourers, being small landholders. The Agaria normally grow two crops in a year, where irrigation facilities are available they grow three crops. They grow bajra, wheat, moong, moth, chilli, brinjal, tomato etc. They also grow commercial crops such as cotton, groundnut and sugarcane. Surplus food grains, vegetable, cash crops are sold directly in the taluka market. A good numbers of families rear cows. All transactions are made in cash.

The Agaria are traditionally guided by its *jamat* (caste-council). The elderly persons belonging to various villages constitute the *jamat*, which settles various disputes like divorce cases and punishes the accused with cash fine. The amount raised in this way is utilised in the repair of mosques and graveyards. A *madrasa* is run by *jamat* with a few children attending it. *Jamat* members customarily assist in the performance of rituals related to the life cycle. Statutory council which is a secular body also exists.

The Agaria belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. They offer prayer

five times a day. They have maintained *silsila* affiliation with two Murshids namely Sadh Insa and Suva Mia. Birth and marriage rituals are performed by their community's *moulavi* and the death rituals by the *qazi*. They observe festivals such as, Ramjan Id, Bakri Id, Moharrum etc. They also take part in several Muslim fairs (*urs*). Some families go to *dargha* of Khwaja Mainuddin Chesti in Ajmer.

Songs relating to marriage ceremony are sung by the women and the qawalis by both men and women.

The Agaria have linkages with other Muslim communities and only a few have relations with Hindu communities. Surplus food grains and a few cash crops are sold to the village Vania, Sindhi Luhana and a few other Muslim traders. Traditionally, Vania and Luhana communities do not accept cooked and uncooked food from Agaria. The Meghwal, Koli and other Muslim communities however accept cooked and uncooked food from them. The Agarias participate in social functions alongwith other communities. The roads, schools, panchayat etc. are shared with Hindu and Muslim communities. They share the grave yard with other Muslims. The Agaria have occupational links with Hindu big farmers who provide employment to them.

The rate of illiteracy among Agaria is quite low. Only a few children attend school or *madrassa*. Although they avail of the modern medicine by going to the taluka or primary health centre for deliveries, yet family planning programmes are not adopted. The Agaria are inclined to modern technology. They use tractor, electric pump sets, chemical manure and insecticides. Organic manures are also favoured by them. A good number of families have availed loan facilities from the IRDP. Drinking water is collected from the tubewell. They depend on firewood and kerosene oil as fuel resources. Nutritional programme (Mid-day meal) is provided to the children in the primary school. They avail of the facilities of public distribution system.

Biplab Das

AGRI

The Agri is so called because they migrated to Gujarat from Agra, though they themselves believe that they were originally Maharashtrians. They are concentrated in Valsad district. Their dialect is a mix of Marathi, Gujarati and Hindi but with outsiders they speak Gujarati. They use Gujarati and Marathi script.

They are non-vegetarian but abstain from eating beef. Wheat and rice are the staple food. Available pulses and vegetables are consumed. Quite a few take tea. Both men and women consume alcohol bought in the market.

The Agri are divided into a number of clans known as *ataks*, the chief function of which is to protect its members and regulate marriage alliances. Although unable to identify their position in the varna order they regard themselves equal to Koli Patel but place themselves lower in relation to Brahmans and Rajputs.

The community is endogamous, but they practise clan exogamy avoiding marriage alliances upto five generations on both sides of parents. Child marriage is practised while the marriage age for girls varies from twelve to fifteen years whereas for the boys it is between fourteen and sixteen years. Marriage is arranged through negotiation and monogamy is the general form. *Sindhur* (vermilion on forehead) is regarded as a symbol of marriage. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorcee is allowed and subsequent remarriage of a divorcee is permitted for both males and females.

The nuclear family is predominant. Women observe *parda* (veil) only in presence of the elder brother of her husband. Joking relationship exists with some degree of kins, especially with grand children, sister-in-law and brother-in-laws. Inheritance of property is through the male line with elder son succeeds to the authority of his father. Inter-family linkages are cordial.

Society does not permit a woman to hold the property or to succeed to the authority of her father, but the women consider themselves equal in the social, ritual and religious matters of the community. Women do not directly contribute to the family income.

But they help the family with their labour, in the agricultural fields and by collecting wood for fuel.

Delivery takes place within the dwelling unit attended by *daïs* (who belongs to Nai community). On the sixth day after birth there is *chatti puja* and the pollution for the child lasts for twelve days while for the mother it extends upto forty days. *Mundan* (tonsure) ceremony of the child takes place in either first, third or fifth year of the child's life in consultation with a *pandit*. The marriage ceremony begins three days in advance with *haldi* and *ratijaga*. *Haldi* is anointed according to the advise of the *pandit* and in the night there is *ratjaga*. The women of the community gather in the house of the bride and the bridegroom and sing songs throughout the night, seeking the blessing of family deity for the peace and prosperity of the couple. *Jan* (wedding party) starts for the bride's house where the bridegroom is received by the relatives of the bride and her sister. The marriage is conducted by the *pandit*. The essential part is *phera* (circumambulation) of sacred fire for four times by the bride and the bridegroom. This is followed by a feast for the members of the community. The *jan* returns next day along with the bride. She comes back to her father's house for three days after which she finally joins her husband. Consummation takes place at husband's house.

The Agri cremate their dead though deceased children and pregnant women are buried. Funeral rituals begin with the body placed on a bamboo bier, which is carried to the cremation ground. The funeral procession includes relatives and friends and the direction of bier is changed midway to the cremation ground. After making three rounds of the pyre, the body is placed on it. On the third day after death, a light is lit in memory of the deceased and on the twelfth day the funeral feast is thrown for the members of the community. Ashes are immersed in the river water or holy Ganga in Haridwar or Benares on the third day.

The major economic resource of the Agri is land. Traditionally they are an agricultural community with the land owned by families. They also work as agricultural labourers on the land owned by others with wages being paid both in cash and kind. Children below the age of fifteen also participate in agricultural activities. The products are sold in the market.

Traditional institutions of the *panch* settle disputes within the

community and regulate issues connected with divorce and re-marriage. The *pramukh* is the head of the *panch*. Oldest members of the families are its members. The *panch* has the authority to fine the guilty and impose social boycott. The Agris do not participate in politics, but they keep contact with the elected members of the statutory panchayat.

They are Hindus and have faith in all Hindu gods and goddesses. "Mari-mata" is considered the goddess of the community. They also worship Seniro Deo, Kakabalia, the deities of small-pox, particularly when they are affected by the disease. The Agris attend the various fairs and festivals of the area.

The Agri have inter-community linkages at the occupational sphere with neighboring communities, such as Koli-Patel, Dubla, Dhodia, etc. They have social relations with these communities but do not follow connubial norms. The Agris exchange both *kacha* and *pakka* food with the several communities. They have entry in the *panchayat ghar* and temples and are allowed to share the water from the well. Their attitude towards developmental programme is positive. Education has not yet made an impact on the community as a whole, though a few among both men and women are educated. They have a positive view towards the family planning programme. They are well aware of modern communication systems. The area is poorly connected with cities and towns. The community has not been able to get much benefit under the development programmes of the government.

N.K. Ghatak

AHIR BORICHA

The Boricha are a group of the Ahir community, which also includes other endogamous group such as the Sorothia, Maschoiya and Pancholi etc. The original habitat of the Boricha is the Kutch district of Gujarat from where they migrated to Jamnagar district due to the chronic drought situation in Kutch. The term Boricha, derived from the terms bori and chana, means something more worthwhile than others. Literally 'bori' means more and 'chana' mean value. According to a legend, the Ahirs were the actual inhabitants of Dwarka since the times of Lord Krishna. In the course of time the Ahirs who settled in Saurashtra came to be known as Sorothia Ahir while those who migrated to Kutch became the Boricha, the Ahirs who settled on the banks of Machoia river became Maschoiya and those who established themselves in the Panchal region are called Pancholi. Presently the Boricha are inhabited in the Jhodia taluka of Jamnagar district, Kutch district and Morvi in Rajkot district. They communicate within the family and kin group in a variant of the Kachchi dialect using the Gujarati script.

The Boricha are vegetarian in their food habits. They take millets like *bajra*, *jowar* and *wheat*. Rice is consumed on ceremonial occasions as also pulses like *moong*, *urad* and *moth*. Seasonally available vegetables, milk and buttermilk are also part of their diet. Palmolein oil is used in cooking and both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are taken. Smoking and chewing of betel leaves is also prevalent.

The Boricha are divided into 52 *attacks* (clans) like Kumbharbadia, Gogra, Davera, Vank, Gangar, Jilaria, Souseta, Natda, Khungla, Gajia, Baria etc. whose function is to regulate marriage alliances. They are aware of the Varna system and regard themselves as belonging to the Kshatriya Varna.

Marriage alliances are negotiated by the parents of prospective couples. A man can marry the daughter of his maternal uncle and the daughter of the father's sister. The child marriage practised in

earlier days, has given way to marriages at the age of 18-20 years in case of females, and 20-24 years in the case of males. Monogamy is the prevalent form of marriage and the application of *sindhur* (vermillion) is the symbol of a married women. Dowry in both cash and gold ornaments is given to the bridegroom by the parents of the bride. After marriage the bride moves to her husband's parent's house. Only males have the right of divorce and the children are the liability of the father in such events. Remarriage of divorced women and widows is permissible.

Nuclear families predominate over extended families. Avoidance relationship is reported between the daughter-in-law and father-in-law while joking relations are permitted with one's wife's younger sister. Male equigeniture is the rule of property interitance. The eldest son succeeds as head of the family on death of his father and inter-family linkages are based on mutual cooperation within the locality.

The women are involved in agricultural operations, collection of fuel and other household activities. They have a significant role in religious affairs of their society but they do not have a role in the mechanism of social control. Although women contribute to the family income, family expenditure is controlled and supervised by male members. On the whole women have low status.

The pre-delivery ritual *Sreemanth* is observed in the seventh month of pregnancy while the first delivery takes place at the women's natal home. Post-delivery pollution is observed for forty days and delivery takes place at the nearby health centre or within the home. Father's sister names the child. In earlier times a ritual was observed in which the hair of the new born was cut and offered to the *Kuldevi* (patron deity) which was followed up with a feast for the assembled kin. Marriage rituals are performed at the bride's residence. It is a convention of the Boricha that the marriage should take place on the day of *Shivaratri*. This custom is still followed by them because it reduces the expenses incurred during the ceremony. Marriages take place at noon officiated by the Brahmin. The customary four circumambulations called *Phera* around the sacred fire or *chori* by the bride and groom together in a clockwise direction is the major feature. The marriage feast is hosted by the parents of the bride on completion of the rituals, the nuptial ceremony takes place at the groom's residence. The

dead are cremated. 'Barma' ritual is observed on the twelfth day after cremation and the *shradha* ceremony is also performed simultaneously.

The Boricha economy is mainly based on cultivation and land is their main economic resource. Some people also work as day labourers, or as contract labourers for the big land holders who engage them on an annual basis for a payment varying between Rs 4000-5000/-, along with food. Rainfed cultivation is practiced but side by side they cultivate paddy crop varieties using tube-well irrigation. There has been an increasing tendency in number of daily and casual agricultural labourers within the community and children are also involved in ancillary agricultural operations. Only a few Boricha also earn their livelihood in service occupations.

They have a traditional caste-council headed by a *Panch* or *Patel*. The members of the council are selected by a voice vote amongst experienced persons of the village. These members settle disputes regarding divorce, division of ancestral property, sharing of water etc. Statutory panchayats also co-exist, performing its functions like overall planning and implementation of different welfare programmes in their respective jurisdictions.

The Borichas are Hindus and practice Hindu rituals. Each ataks (clan) has its *kuldevi* or patron deity such as, Kanmerimata, Momaimata, Sikotarmata, Chamundamata etc. to whom great devotion is shown. In addition they also worship all the deities of the Hindu wider pantheon and celebrate festivals like Holi, Diwali, Dassera, Navratri, Sitalasatami, Janmastami, with enthusiasm and in accordance with traditions. They have their traditional folklore and folk songs are sung at their marriages.

Their traditional inter-community linkages were mainly based on commensal norms and on the concept of pollution and purity. The Boricha accept water from the Brahmin households but the Brahmans do not reciprocate. The Borichas however do not accept water from the Wagri, Koli, Chamar and Ganchi communities. The Kunbi Patels similarly do not accept water from the Borichas. The tradition of Dharam Bhai and Dharam Bahin across the "clean castes" are reported.

Formal educational levels within the community is low with boys studying upto the secondary level and girls upto only the primary level. Some persons have also obtained graduate degrees.

Their attitude is favourable towards modern medical care in preference to indigenous medicines. They are aware of planned families but their attitude is not too positive. They are aware of modern farming practices including chemical fertilizers and a few have benefited from IRDP programmes. Their children avail of the mid-day meal scheme in school and they utilize the public distribution system as well.

S.K. Nandy

AHIR/MASCHOIYA

Ahirs, also called Ahad or Aiydr, who are settled on the banks of Machhu-katia river are called Maschoiya Ahir. In Saurashtra there are four groups of Ahir. The other three are Soarathia Ahirs of Sorat area, Pancholi Ahirs of Panchal area i. e. Jhalawad area of Saurashtra and Kutchchi Ahirs i. e. of Kutch area. Ahirs claim that they have descended from Yadava race of Lord Krishna and they are Krishnapanthi in their religion. Ahir came from Sumra dynasty and settled and married the girls from local clans. Maschoiya Ahirs are mainly distributed in Rajkot district and in few scattered areas of Junagadh district. They speak Gujarati language and write in Gujarati script.

They are vegetarian. Their staple diet is Bajra, Jowar wheat. Occasionally they consume rice. They consume all types of pulses except lentils. They use groundnut oil for cooking purposes. Few of them are habituated to take alcoholic drinks. They use milk products regularly. Some of them smoke bidi. The older generation is habituated of smoking hukka (hubble-bubble).

They have different exogamous *ataks* which are all equal in status. The common *attaks* are Dangar, Birda, Meta, Herrla, Kelodia, Kangadh, Khokatara, Shiayar, Chabda, Chudasama etc. Each *atak* had its separate *Kuldevi* (family diety) like Asapra, Chamunda etc. They claim to have belonged to Kshtriya Varna. Ahirs are lower in social rank to Rajput and Darbar groups of Gujarat. Other caste groups of this area also feel in this way.

Consanguineous marriages like mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's son are allowed. Marriage by negotiation is the common form. A few cases of love marriages are also reported. Monogamy is rule but earlier polygyny was practised by some of their ancestors. Now *sagai* (engagement) is done in childhood. Marriageable age for the boy is 20-22 years and for girls 16-18 years. Junior levirate is permitted. Symbols of marriage for women are wearing of full sari, ornaments and vermilion on hair parting and *bindi* on forehead. Bride price prevails amongst them and it

is around Rs. 500/- Remarriage only in case of a divorcee is allowed. Divorce can be sought by either party and there is a rule for providing maintenance allowance. *Ghar-jamai* system is also allowed. Now they encourage *samuha - laga* (community marriages). Residence after marriage is patrilocal.

Joint families or extended type of families are prevalent among them. However, in towns and cities, nuclear families are increasing in number. Avoidance exist between daughter-in-law and father-in-law. Joking relationship exists between sister-in-law and her husband's younger brother and sister etc. Family property is divided in equal shares among the sons. Female members are not entitled to property share. Inter-family linkages are cordial.

Women have no right to ancestral property. They have to look after their children and household work. They enjoy low status. Females take part in family rituals and religious activities. But their role in political affairs is marginal.

After performing *Seemant* or *Khola-bharnu* during the seventh month of first pregnancy, the expectant mother is taken to her natal home for delivery. They go to a hospital for delivery and remain there for 3-4 days after delivery. Previously, delivery used to take place at home under the supervision of local mid-wife. Child is given bath on the very first day and mother is given ritual bath on the sixth day in a ceremony called *chatti*, on the sixth day in which, father's sister names the child. Birth pollution exists for the mother upto one and a quarter months and completes after *jal-pujan* and *kuldevi pujan*. After one year *bal-muvanu*, (tonsure) ceremony is performed at the shrine of their kul-devi by the Valand. Child's father's sister collects the hair in her lap and immerse them in nearby river. Children and relatives are given feast on that occasion. Marriage offer comes from boy's side. Before marriage betrothal is performed. Three days before marriage, songs are sung by the sisters and other female relatives. On the marriage day *haldi-pithi* (turmeric paste) is applied at least three times to boy and girl separately at their homes. Their mother do the *chakla pujan* (worshipping of pother's wheel by rice, *kanku*, vermilion and offer few vegetables). Priest belonging to Audichi Brahman comes and erects the *mandap* (marriage booth) and installs Ganapathi. *Mameru*, (gifts consisting of new marriage dress for girl) comes from her maternal uncle. Bridegroom comes to the

bride's place riding on a horse in procession. Bride and bridegroom take four *phas* (circumambulating the sacrificial fire). After this, *hastamilap* is done followed by a feast. On reaching the groom's house, the bridegroom and the bride visit their kuldevi (family deity). Consummation of marriage takes place on that day. After staying for ten days at her in-law's house, the bride comes to her natal home where she is given new clothes, ornaments, utensil etc. This is called *paile aana*. The *dusri aana* is on Diwali.

They keep the dying person on the floor to breath his/her last. They give the bath to the dead body and wrap up with new clothes but Green coloured clothes for married women. They carry the dead body in *thatdi* (bamboo bier) containing one coconut on each of the four corners. On reaching cremation ground they break the four coconuts. The eldest son puts the fire on the right leg's first toe of the deceased. Clothes, personal effects of the deceased are collected by the members of Harijan community. Later on, the son collects unburnt bones or ashes in an earthen pot and hang it on a tree. On third day the son disposes the ashes in a nearby river. Death pollution continues for twelve days. On eleventh day. Valand comes and shaves the head of the sons and other male relatives. They give *Sidha*. (raw cereals and vegetables) food to Valand. The Brahman priest performs *shradh* ceremony. They also give *daan* to their Brahman, Barot, Charan, etc. After three, and six months, they perform *traimasi shradh* and *sanmasi shradh*. They throw rice balls towards crows in the name of the deceased in each Bhadrava month. They erect *paliyas*, (memorial stones) in the name of their ancestors. On every Navratri festival, they worship these *paliyas* by *kanku*, vermilion paste and *srifal*, (coconut). They wash the *paliyas* by opium water called *Kousambi*.

Traditionally, the Ahirs are mainly pastoral. They are also cultivators. Majority of them are now engaged in agricultural activities. They are landowning community. Very few among them are landless, who earn by doing agricultural labour work. Some of them are now tenants and share-coppers. Those who are landholders employ labourers from other communities. They employ *saathi* labour from communities like Ghedia, Koli, Chunwaliya Koli, Shenva, Bavha, Maru-Vankar etc. for one or two year contract. Now a few among them are in Government services,

in textile mills and factories. Few of them have started petty business with Government loans, under various self-employment schemes.

The caste council operates at village level managed by six persons who are elected by voice vote. They try to solve the disputes relating to marriage, property etc. The Maschoiya Ahir are associated with the Yadav association representing all the Ahirs. They run boarding houses, hostels for the stay of Ahir children in order to pursue their studies.

The Maschoiya Ahirs are Hindus by religion. They are Krishnapanthi and consider Lord Krishna as their supreme God. They have different attaks, each having their *kul-devi*. They worship their *kul devi* at the time of Navratri and their female members perform the *dandiyaraas* (dance) before their goddesses. They worship other Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Ramji, Shankar, Ganesh, Lakshmi etc. They undertake pilgrimage to different sacred places like Somnath, Dwaraka, Puri, Mathura, Brindavan, Kashi etc. whenever they get an opportunity. The female members engaged themselves in *bharat kaam* (embroidery) making of toran, bead work etc. learnt from their own community members.

They are one of the *ther-tasili* group of Saurashtra. This *ther-tasili* group includes Bharwad, Charan, Rabari, Valand, Sagar, all Darbars, Lohar, Suthar, Ahirs etc who inter-dine. But no connubial relations are allowed. They have commensal relations now even with some Brahmans. In recent years some educated people have established marital relations with other groups of Ahirs. Only the Dangar *attak* of them keep marriage alliance with Hati community.

The level of literacy continues to be very low among the females. They mostly take recourse to modern medicine. Their females usually go for sterilization. Majority of their houses are electrified. Their people avail of the different assistance programmes of the Government. The younger generation are availing self-employment schemes. They make use of public distribution system and the banking facilities in their region.

Aditi Mukherjee

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AHIR/PANCHOLI

The Pancholi is one of the five endogamous divisions of Ahirs. It is believed that they migrated from Gokul Brindaban to Dwarka along with Lord Krishna; and in course of time from Dwaraka, they migrated and settled in various parts of Saurashtra region. The community is named after the territory they live, i.e., Panchal in Saurashtra. They are distributed over 18 villages of Una taluka and also in Madhuva, Savar Kundla and Talala talukas in Junagadh districts. They are also distributed in Bhavnagar and Amerli districts. Gujarati is their mother tongue and they use Gujarat script. Very few educated male members can speak Hindi.

Pancholi Ahirs are vegetarians, whose staple food is bajri (millet) *roti* known locally as *rotila*. Occasionally they eat *roti* of wheat. Sometimes they take rice along with *roti*. They take food thrice in a day called *heerman* (breakfast), *ronda* (lunch) and *varu* (supper). Tur and moong are the pulses taken and the cooking medium is groundnut oil. Potato, onion, tomato, brinjal, green chilly are the commonly consumed vegetables. Seasonally available fruits like mango, papaya, guava, *chikoo*, *banana* are eaten. Consumption of milk or *chach* (butter milk) is a must after both the meals. Home made sweets like *ladoo*, *mihtipuri*, *shera*, *lapshi* are taken on festive occasions.

The community has 44 *ataks* (clans), which are of equal status, having names like Kalosoriys, Kataria, Dhola, Vania, Ksadh, Vasoyo, Jholandra, Nakhom, Hadia, Buldania etc. They are exogamous in nature. Each *atak* has its own deity worshipped before and after any function or ritual. *Mundan* (tonsures) ceremony of the first male children of different families from the same *kutumb* (lineage) is performed at a time. A few have started prefixing *atak* names. The community stands after Brahmin; but above Maru Kumbhar, Sadhu, Kumbhar, Suthar, Lohar and Harijan in local social hierarchy. But this view has not been accepted by Maru Kumbhars, who claim higher status than them. The community claims to belong to Vaisya Varna.

Atak exogamy is the rule. A girl from mother's clan is avoided for four to five generations. Girls are married off when they are between 18 to 22 years while boys between 21 to 25 years. Previously they had minor marriages. Wedding alliances are arranged through negotiations by parents or elders. Monogamy is the usual form of marriage. However, a male, with the consent of his first wife and caste council, is permitted to have one more wife for the sake of having a male child. *Sindhur* and *mangalsutra* (made up of gold) or black thread (worn as bracelet), *nathadi* (nose pin) and *kangan* of ivory or plastic and *payal* (anklet) are the symbols of married woman. Three thousand rupees are paid by the groom's father to bride's father to lessen marriage expenditure. Bride's father, depending upon his economic condition, gives 10 to 30 grams of gold ornaments besides some household utensils and five to seven pairs of clothes to the bride. Patrilocal residence is the norm. Divorce on grounds of maladjustment between spouses is allowed. Widow remarriage is rare as permission of her in-laws is required. Children are considered the responsibility of father in divorce cases. Junior sororate is preferred in remarriage. Wearing of plastic made *kangan* and payment of a fixed amount of rupees three thousand towards bride price for the last 15 to 20 years are a few changes reported.

Vertical and horizontal extended families and as well as nuclear families are prevalent. A woman is required to keep *ghungath* (veil), *maryada rakhna* in front of her father-in-law, elder brother-in-law and all her elder affinal relatives. Sons equally share the parental property. Eldest son succeeds the authority on the death of his father. They maintain close relations with members of same *Kutumb* (lineage) and the elders of neighbouring communities help is sought in solving inter-family or intra-family disputes.

The woman has no right of inheritance. Collection of fuel and fodder besides taking care of cattle, and household duties are being carried out efficiently by the women. On the whole, they have low status. They have a vital role in the ritual performance. Their advice is sought in most of the routine social affairs. Woman does not move out of the village for earning but contributes to family income by employing herself as agricultural labourer.

Missing of two or three consecutive monthly cycles is believed to indicate that a woman is pregnant. The parents of the women

present new clothes, sweets and nine coconuts during the seventh month of the first pregnancy in a ceremony called *khola bharna*. The pregnant woman is taken to her natal house for delivery. The delivery is attended by a local *dai* (midwife). The mother is treated as impure for five weeks. *Chatti* (fifth day in case of female child and sixth day in case of male child) is performed by putting the child into cradle and is made to taste some soft sweets. A girl's hair is shaved off by the Navi (barber) when she has passed one and a quarter year. *Mundan* (tonsure) of the first male child is performed by the Jogi who play drums at the local *asthan* (abode) of the *atak* deity. *Fui* (father's sister) gives name to the child after consulting a Brahmin priest who suggests by looking into *janam kundali* (horoscope) of the child.

Alliances are usually initiated by groom's party through nearest kin or friend or neighbour. After finalisation *vaishal* (engagement) takes place. This is performed by visiting five member team, which includes one or two females, by presenting one or two small ornaments besides a pair of clothes. Gifts are presented to the prospective daughter-in-law atleast once in year on a festival as engagement is done at an early age. Marriages are usually performed during months of *Mah*, *Pose*, *Fagun* and *Vaisakh*. Wedding rituals commence with the application of turmeric called *Petti* for one to three days. The maternal uncle brings gifts known as *mousada* two days before or on the day of wedding. The wedding booth is erected and Lord Krishna is worshipped on the day of wedding. The wedding rituals conclude with four *pheras* (circumambulation) of sacred fire and a feast is thrown to the groom's party. Then the bride is brought to the groom's house for nuptial ceremony after worshipping the clan deity on their way. After a few days she is taken by her parents and again sent back to her in-law's house permanently.

The dead are cremated except the children below six years of age who are buried facing towards south. The foetus is removed from the womb of a deceased pregnant women before cremation. The funeral procession is led by the youngest and eldest son. The ash is collected in an earthen pot and disposed off in the river water. On ninth day after death, the hair and moustache of the chief mourner are shaved off by the barber. On *gyarma* (eleventh) and *barma* (twelfth) day in case of female and male respectively *sradh*

is performed. *Varashee* (anniversary) is performed on *Panchami* of *Bhadra* (Aug-Sept.) month.

Land is the major economic resources of the Pancholi Ahirs. The nature of ownership is individual. The community is mainly a landholding community having a minimum of 3 to 8 acres of cultivable land. They grow two crops of *bajra* or ground nut, during monsoon and wheat or sugarcane and cotton in the winter season respectively. Agriculture is not only traditional occupation but the present primary occupation. A few in recent years earn as labourers in diamond industry at Surat and Bombay. Wages are paid in cash. They have direct link with markets where they sell their yields. A few have shifted to non-agricultural pursuits and have migrated to nearby towns during the last 15 years.

The community has a caste council at village level with a *Pramukh* (head). They have a registered *samaj* called *Dhukadwa* group for all 18 villages of Una Taluka. It is managed by 5-7 executive committee members who are selected by a voice vote in a general body meeting held on the day after Sankranti. The meeting takes place at Dhukadwa village in which all activities of the year pertaining to the community are discussed and decisions arrived at. Each community has its own *gnati Patel* (headman). Inter-community and intra-community disputes were settled by *gnati Patel* and village Patel respectively. If the parties were not satisfied or in case of inter-village disputes then five Patels, called *Panch* were set up to resolve the same. When disputes are not resolved at this level then the matter is to be referred to Raja Sabha of Junagadh. The traditional village panchayat and the caste council neither had nor does it have the power of punishing defaulter except pursuing its members.

Hinduism is the religion professed by Pancholi Ahir community. Lord Krishna who is popularly known as *Bansariwala* is worshipped as the principal God. Each clan has its own deity. They build *Asthan* (local abode) where the newly married couple pay a visit, before entering the house for nuptial ceremony. Quite a few visit sacred centres like Dwaraka, Prayag, Gokul Mathura and a few visit Puri, Badrinath and Rameshwaram. A few visit Pushkar near Ajmer. Rajgor Brahman perform all life - cycle rituals except *mundan* ceremony. Besides celebrating Janmasthami as a major festival by observing a fast on that day and taking part in the

rasgarbha throughout the night other festivals like Diwali, Holi, Sri Ramnavami, Dasara, Makar sankranthi, etc. are celebrated. A few have become followers of Pandurang shastry of Bombay.

As agriculturists, Pancholi Ahirs are socially and economically linked by ties of inter-dependence with Brahmins, Harijans, Maru Kumbhars and other neighbouring communities beside artisan communities like Kumbhars, Suthars, Lohars and Mochis. Brahmans do not accept cooked food or water from them. Maru Kumbhar along with Lohar, Suthar accept food and water from them. Persons of different communities are employed on yearly on contract basis by those who have sufficient cultivable land. Very few Pancholi Ahirs maintain *Bhagya* (cultivator-labour relationship) with the members of Maru Kumbhars and Harijans. They pay rupees three to four thousands and a set of clothes per year and provide one meal in a day. Some Pancholi Ahir get loan for short term from a money-lender locally called *seth*, who usually purchases grain from them. They visit nearby towns quite often for their day to day requirements. They depend on middlemen who sell agricultural products in nearby towns. The participation of Pancholi Ahirs in political activities or public functions is confined to local level only.

Although there are some graduates and a few doctors and engineers, teachers; on the whole the level of literacy is low. It is very low amongst females. They utilize modern medical facilities for minor and major ailments, though deliveries mostly take place at houses attended by local mid-wives. The females mainly undergo tubectomy operations under family welfare schemes. They have drinking water facilities and most of the houses are having electric connections. Quite a few have been getting subsidy for pump sets, bullock and cart under IRDP scheme. A majority of the Pancholi Ahir possess transistors. Very few have gohar gas plants. Almost all agricultural fields have wells fitted with electric or crude oil pumpsets and are using chemical fertilizers as well as pesticides. A majority of them have savings bank accounts in nearby public sector banks and even a few get loan from co-operative banks for their agricultural activities.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

AHIR PARATHARIA

The Paratharia is named after the territory they live called Parathar. Parathar is one of the four principal divisions of Ahirs in Kutch district. Gokul Mathura is believed to be their native place from where they migrated to Dwaraka alongwith Lord Krishna about 5000 years ago. They migrated further to Parathar region of Saurashtra and then came to Kutch about 400-500 years ago. The community is mainly distributed in 84 villages in Kutch district out of which 34 villages are in Bhuj. 24 villages are in Anjar, about 12 villages are in Nakhatrana and a few villages are in Vagad (Bhachau and Rahpar) talukas of the district. They are also distributed in a few villages of Saurashtra. Besides, they believe that their people are also in Rajasthan and Haryana. Ahiri is the dialect spoken within kin groups, but Kachchi dialect is spoken with others. Though many male members can speak Gujarati, but only a few female follow Gujarati. Gujarati script is used. The male members wear *vandani* or *chorni* (trouser) and *shirt* as upper garment. The married female members have *gahghra* (petticoat) and *sarval kachchari* (blouse) with embroidery work whereas unmarried girls wear *pana* (without embroidery work). The widow wear plain black clothes.

The community is vegetarian in its food habits. Bajri is the millet they take and occasionally they take rice. The vegetables consumed are Potato, brinjal, onion and tomato. Moong (green gram) *chodia* (cleaned moong pulse) *kathor* and *tur* are the most commonly used pulses. Groundnut oil is used as the cooking medium. Milk or butter milk is taken daily after both the meals. Home-made sweets prepared out of milk and wheat are eaten during festive occasions. They take *tikadi* (prepared out of wheat, moong and sugar) on Gokul Asthami festival after observing fast on the day.

The Paratharia Ahir have exogamous groups called *atak* or *nukh* (clans) such as Baththa, Gegol, Dheela, Dangar, Changha, Varjun, Matha and Chod. They are exogamous in nature and

enjoy equal status. The community has surnames like Jeesani, Sujuni and Roopani etc. which came into existence after the names of their ancestors. Regulating marriage alliance and indicating one's descent are the main functions of the clan. They place themselves after Brahman, Bawa, but at par with Kshatriya, Rebari, Lohana and Muslims and all artisan castes except Suthar, Lohar. They consider themselves above Harijans, Bhangi, Koli and Datanaia (Vagri) in local social hierarchy.

Alliances locally called *Sagpan* are fixed at about two years of age of a child and marriages are held in the age range of 10-15 years. Usually Rs.40/- are paid towards bride price. This amount goes upto Rs. 2,000/- to Rs. 10,000/- depending upon the age of girl (10 years and above) and economic condition of the girls. Besides, she is given ornaments, utensils, cot etc when she separates from her father-in-law to set up a separate family. This is called *Zhura*. Marriages are arranged through negotiation by elders. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriage. *Chutha-Chedha* (divorce) is rarely permitted and that too on grounds of mal-adjustment between a woman and her mother-in-law or between spouses or infertility of the wife. Widow remarriage is allowed but one has to wait atleast for one year. The children are retained by her in-laws.

Both nuclear and extended type of families are prevalent among the Ahirs. Joint families split up as soon as they face space problem i.e. after two or three marriages in a family. Parents stay with the youngest son and so he gets residential land of his parents in return for the care and service he renders towards them. All sons get equal share of the parental property. Besides financial, other help is extended to a daughter at the time of the birth of her first child. The eldest son succeeds the authority after his father's death. They interact mostly with the brother's families followed by lineage (*Sabdan*) and clan and seek the help of the elders of the community in times of crisis.

The Paratharia woman has no right to property or inheritance. She takes care of the domestic animals besides managing household duties and extending her hand in the agricultural pursuits of the family. She earns as an agricultural labourer as well as labourer in the *achhat rahat karya* (scarcity relief work) but she is not allowed to move alone out of the village for earning

purposes. She is consulted on all social activities but the final decision rests with her husband. She has a vital role in ritual activities and sings songs and beats dhol.

The pregnant woman is sent to her parent's house during her seventh month of first pregnancy and presented with new pair of clothes and coconuts which is called *Zhuralachar Kholbharna*. Delivery takes place at home attended by an experienced *dai* or trained midwife. The mother is treated as impure for forty days. The child is given name by the father's sister in a simple ceremony on the sixth day called *chatti Mundan* (tonsure) of the first son in the family is performed at the shrine of the clan deity.

Negotiations are initiated directly by the boy's father. *Sagpan* (betorothal) is performed by presenting atleast one pair of clothes and one or two ornaments. The girl is presented atleast one gift in a year till the marriage is solemnized or she is brought to her in law's house for nuptial ceremony on completion of 18 years of age. This ceremony takes place even after several years of marriage depending upon the age of the bride. All rituals like *Ganeshpoojan*, *pethilagana* (application of turmeric) *mandaparopam* (erection of marriage booth) and finally circumambulation of sacred fire are - observed in accordance with the guidance of a Rajgor Brahman.

The dead are cremated. However, children of two to three years of age are buried facing their head towards north. The mourning and pollution period is observed till *vidhi* is performed on the twelfth day of death by wearing black dress by women folk and old clothes and white *rumal* (handkerchief) or *pagadi* (turban) over the head by the male members of the family of the deceased. In *vidhi* ceremony, all patrilineal male relatives undergo head shaving and then *ghadadena* is performed. After feeding four to ten Brahmans, all the assembled relatives (except persons elder to the dead) have a meal. *Barasee* (anniversary) is performed within the household on Diwali night.

Land is the major economic resource of the community. It is controlled by individual proprietorship. The community is mainly land-owning. Cultivation and agricultural labour is the traditional occupation as well as the present primary source of livelihood. Petty business is a subsidiary occupation. A few of them also service in Western Railway, Kandla Port, State Transport Corporation and in primary schools. Milk selling is the other

occupation of the community, for which each household on an average have three to four cows/she-buffaloes. They depend on the market for their daily requirements. The wages are paid in cash. A few of them are plying trucks from Kandla Port to different places and have steady income. Their women extend a helping hand in agricultural activities.

The community has *gnathi Patel* (head man of the caste) in each village. They select *Agrasar* (chief of the community) from among the *gnathi Patels* or other leading member of the community. *Agrasar* or *Mukhi* was empowered to punish the guilty by socially boycotting or by imposing *Korie* (currency of the Kutch prior to independence i.e. cash fine). They used to have traditional village panchayat headed by a Patel who also acted as a revenue Patel of the village. He was the representative of the ruler of Kutch. This post was hereditary. He did not have to pay land revenue to the ruler because of his services of collecting land tax from the village. He was assisted by police patel in this task as well as for maintaining law and order in the village. The Patel with the help of *Panch* (four elder members of the village) including two *Gnathi Patels* in case of inter-community conflict used to settle all the disputes of different communities. The post of *Patel* has been abolished after the introduction of Panchayat system. The powers of the *Agrasar* have been curtailed.

Vaishnav sect of Hinduism is practised by the Paratharia Ahirs. Lord Krishna is considered as the chief deity of the community. They undertake pilgrimage to Narayan Sarovar, Dwaraka and Somanath and sometimes to Gokul, Mathura and Haridwar. They give much importance to Janmashtami and Diwali and observe fast on these festivals. Holi and Maker Sankranti are also celebrated by them. Their women sing some folk songs of the region during festive occasions.

As agriculturalist, the Paratharia Ahirs maintain socio-economic relations with all the neighbouring communities. They accept food and water from the Brahmin and exchange food with the Rabari, Lohana and aritsan castes. But they neither accept nor exchange food with Meghval, Bhangl, Koli and Datania (Vaghri) communities. Facilities of well for drinking water, crematorium, road, school and gram panchayat are shared with other communities. The community's participation is confined to local politics only.

Cultivator-contract labourer relationship exists. The system known as *bhagyadari* also exist (land-lord-tenant relation) in which the lands are given to the tenants on a year to year basis beginning first of Vaisakh. They have economic relation with the artisans.

The level of literacy is poor among the males and almost nil among the female members of the Paratharia community. They visit hospitals and have positive attitude towards family planning programmes in which mostly females get operated. Drinking water facility either in the form of taps or wells is available. A few get the facilities of loan and subsidy under Integrated Rural Development Programme and have Savings Bank account in nearby banks. They are exposed to mass media through transistors, cinema and post and telegraph. A majority of them have electricity facilities. Mid-day meal is available to their school going children. Ration shop is within the easy reach of the community. They avail of the banking facilities.

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AHIR SOROTHIA

The community name is believed to have derived from Soroth region, their homeland. They claim to have migrated from Mathura and adjoining area along with lord Krishna more than 1500 years ago. They also claim descent from Rajput and have alliance with Babria Rajput. Some claim alliance with Sumra dynasty of Sind. In order to escape harassment at the hands of Junagadh Nawab, they migrated to Kutch district. The male members of the community suffix the word 'Sorathia' to their names. Sorothia are exclusively distributed in Anjar and Bhuj talukas of Kutch district. At present, most of them are living in urban centres. Although most of the males speak Kachchi dialect, they use mainly Gujarati for speaking and also for writing.

The community is purely vegetarian. *Bajra* is the millet. They also take rice. Onion, potato, brinjal and other vegetables are consumed by them. Butter-milk and curd are essential after meals. *Mung* and *Tur* are the pulses commonly consumed. Groundnut oil is used for cooking purposes. Seasonal fruits like banana, apple, mango and lemon are consumed. Sweets like *kheer* are taken as special food during festivals.

The Sorothia has eight equal statused clans (Nukh), Baldania, Hadia, Chotara, Gudasarania, Vaghvamshi, Malsatar etc. The clans are exogamous and are believed to have become distinct on the basis of specific Brahman group whose services are taken. The Gor Brahman serve the Baldania clan. They are ranked lower than Brahman. Jadeja, Mestri and Patel. They claim to belong to Kashyap gotra.

Clan exogamy is the rule of marriage. Preferred age of marriage in case of boys and girls is 21-24 years and 18-21 years respectively. Mates are acquired through negotiation. Monogamy is the rule. *Sindur* (vermilion) on the *mang* (parting of hair) is the symbol of a married woman. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriage. Divorce is discouraged. However, divorce can be obtained on grounds of maladjustment or insanity and in such cases

divorced woman is remarried outside her husband's family. Junior sororate is preferred for a widower. A widow can also marry again. However all rituals are not performed in the case of widow or a divorced woman's remarriage. Widow/widower is to wait for atleast one year to remarry. There has been a gradual switching over to community marriages to reduce marriage expenditure.

Nuclear and joint families are prevalent among the Sorothia. Maternal uncle bring *mousala* at the time of the marriage of his sister's son or daughter (consisting of a new pair of clothes, one or two ornaments and cash ranging from Rs. 50/- to 1000/-) in order to compensate his sister's share in her ancestral property. The sister gives name to her brother's first son or daughter and presents new clothes on *chhatti* (the sixth day ritual after birth of the child). Only sons inherit the property. Succession is through the eldest son. The families of Sorothia intimately interact among themselves.

Woman has no right of inheritance. However they are given some share on becoming widow during young age or as per the wishes of their parents. They enjoys equal status in ritual and religious activities of the community. They are an asset to the family as she looks after household activities, extends a helping hand in the agricultural activities of the family and also earns as much as she can, by selling vegetables in the markets of nearby towns.

In case of child birth the parents of the expecting mother present new clothes, sweets etc during the seventh month of first pregnancy of their daughter in a ceremony called *seemanth*. Pollution period for mother extends to one month. Name is given by the father's sister (*fui*) on sixth day. Maternal uncle presents gifts like *zhabhala* (new cloth) and, depending upon affordability *madhul* (gold chain) to the child.

Marriage alliance is usually initiated through a mediator by the boy's parents. After completing all formalities *sagpan* or *vevishal* (betrothal ceremony) is performed by giving gifts to the bride. Marriage is solemnized within two years of betrothal ceremony. Marriage is performed for two days. On the first day, *Ganeshpoojan*, *Mandaparopan* (erection of marriage booth) and *masala-lana* is performed in which the girl is gifted with new pair of clothes and some ornaments by the maternal uncle. Marriage is completed by

making four *phera* (circumambulations) of the sacred fire. Bride accompanied by one or two of her female relatives, is taken to her in-law's house. The new couple is taken to the shrine of their clan deity for blessings before nuptial ceremony takes place. After two or three days she is taken to her parent's house and brought back to the in-law's house parmanently.

The dead are cremated. Only the children upto two years of age and those who die during epidemics are buried. Head and moustache of the eldest son or the chief mourner are shaved off before *Baramo* on twelfth day. Ashes are collected and are immersed in the river or lake water. *Bhagyat Saptah* is organised after *Baramo* for the peace of the departed soul. *Barshi* (death anniversary) is performed by feeding one or two Brahman priests.

Land is the major economic resource of the community. Agriculture is the traditional as well as principal occupation of the Sorothas. A majority of them have lands where they grow vegetables. Some of them earn as construction workers and a few work as contractors, or as hoteliers, or a few are employed in whitecollar jobs. Vegetable trade at Anjar town is almost fully dominated by the Sorothia. The Sorothia women also do retail business of vegetables. Majority of the children are working with their close relatives. All transactions are made in cash. The Sorothias who live nearby towns have taken to petty trade due to lack of irrigation facilities for farming.

They have registered caste coucils at local and district level. A nine to eleven member executive committee comprising of one President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and five or seven members is selected once in a year. Each family contributes Rs. 15/- per year towards membership of the community. Widow and poor members of the community are given financial help or loan for their livelihood. The members of the community may hire vessels at concessional rate during marriages. A youth wing, Yuvak Sanghatan of the local caste council organizes Navratri and other cultural or religious programmes of the community.

They profess Hinduism. Lord Krishna is the chief god of the community. Each clan has its own deity. For instance, Adia clan worships Khodiarma and Kataria clan worships Vachaidada. All newly married couples seek the blessings of the clan deity before commencing married life. Dwaraka, Mathura and Haridwar are

the sacred centres being visited by them. Although all major Hindu festivals are celebrated, Janmasthami (birth day of Lord Krishna) has significant place in their religious calender. Majority of the members participate in the Rathayatra of Krishna Bhagwan on the Janamasthami day.

Being agriculturalists and labourers, they have economic interdependence with the neighbouring communities, but they have special economic linkages with Mestri and Patel communities with whom they exchange water, *kachcha* and *pucca* food. A few incidents of *dharam bhai* or *sakhi* (putative kinship) are also reported. Excepting Swamy Narayan Panthi of Leva-Patels, they share wells facilities of road, school, library etc. with several other castes. They do not share crematorium with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Participation in political activities of the community is limited to local level only.

The level of literacy is moderate among the Sorothisia Ahir. Some graduates and a few lawyers are there in the community. Available modern medical facilities are utilised. The community has a positive approach towards family planning programmes. Drinking water facilities and electric connections are available in many households of the community. Only a few got loans under Employment Guarantee Scheme. They make use of modern media, and their children get mid-day meal in the school. Quite a few have irrigation wells fitted with electric motors and use chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Their attitude towards saving is favourable.

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and

Aditi Mukherjee

ANAVIL BRAHMAN

The Anavil Brahman, a large and dominant community are also known as Mastan and Bhatela. The name Anavil is derived from Anaval, a village situated about forty miles east of Surat. According to the Census report of 1901, their population was 30,325 as reported by Enthoven 1920. At present their concentration in the area is stretching from the river Tapi to the town of Vapi which covers Surat and Valsad districts. They speak Gujarati among themselves as well as in relation to others and use the Gujarati script. A few of them living in urban areas also speak Hindi. Educated Anvils are well-versed in English too.

They are pure vegetarians with *jowar* and rice being the staple food. They consume variety of pulses and grams, locally available fruits and vegetables. Tea and milk are common beverages. Some men smoke bidi and cigarette.

There are two major subgroups among Anavils; Desai and Bhatela. Further, they have twelve exogamous divisions like Vasistha, Kashyap, Atri, Parasar, Gautam, Osnas, Galab, Angastha, Garg, Sankhayam, Batsab and Kanab. They have equal status. The Anavils are very much aware of the varna system and place themselves in the category of Brahman varna though other Brahmans considers them socially inferior.

They practise endogamy at the community level and maintain clan exogamy. They practise adult marriage and the match is settled through negotiation though in recent times the incidence of love marriages are increasing. Monogamy is the common form of marriage and the symbols of marriage for a woman is *chandla* (vermillion mark on the forehead) and *mangalsutra* (wedding pendant). Dowry is given both in cash and kind and is known as *vankhdo*. The rules of residence is patrilocal. There is no ban on either party from seeking divorce. In such event children are given to the custody of the father. Remarriage is not allowed for woman and in recent times there has been an upward trend in the marriageable age.

The family pattern includes both the nuclear as well as the extended type. Avoidance relationships are maintained between daughter-in-law and father-in-law and also between sister-in-law (yr Br Wi) and the elder brother-in-law (Hu el Br). Similarly, joking relations also exist between sister-in-law' (el Br wi) and brother-in-law (Hu yr Br) and between grand parents and grand children. Male equigeniture is its rule of inheritance with the eldest son succeeding as head of his family on the death of his father.

Anavil women occupy a low status compared to that of their men-folk. They participate in social, ritual, economic and religious activities alongwith men but a woman does not enjoy powers of decision making. Neither do they have rights over ancestral property, nor have a role in the mechanism of social control or political sphere. They mainly look after family expenditure and household management.

They observe pre-delivery rituals. *Srimanth kholabharnai* (literally lap filling) ceremony is performed at her husband's house in the seventh month of a woman's first pregnancy. The pregnant woman receives new clothes from her parents and at the end of the ceremony a feast is given to the female relatives and friends. Delivery mostly takes place in the house assisted by a *suyani* or an experienced mid-wife. After the birth, the umbilical cord or the *nur* is cut off by a sharp knife and the *on* (placenta) is buried in the backyard of the house. The period of pollution after birth lasts for four weeks and on the sixth day *chhatti* ceremony is performed in the house when both mother and child are given a ritual bath and new clothes to wear. A sweet dish is distributed among children. The new born is also named on this day in consultation with the *Jyotish* (priest-cum-astrologer). Both the *mundan* and the *Jajeau* (sacred thread ceremony) is observed in the case of males.

Marriage is preceeded by *magni* (finalization of marriage). The date of marriage is fixed by the Brahman priest. Both the bride and the groom are anointed with *pithi* (a paste of turmeric powder and oil with camphor) by women relatives of their respective families in which the elder brother's wife and maternal aunt play an active role. Marriage rituals are performed at the bride's residence guided by a Brahman priest. This includes the *Kanyadan*

(performed by the bride's parents) the tying of the *mangalsutra* round the bride's neck by the groom and the *phera* (circumambulation) around sacred fire by the bride and groom together. This is followed by a grand dinner. The bride and groom depart for the groom's house the next day after bride's mother worships the wheels of the carriage in which they are to travel. *Suhag rat* (consummation of marriage) is held on the third day after marriage at the groom's residence.

The Anavil cremate their dead. Close relatives and friends carry the body to the cremation ground. The pollution period lasts for twelve days. On the eleventh day after death, the *sradh* ceremony takes place in which relatives, friends, neighbours and other villagers participate in a feast. The *masik*, *trimasik*, *chhomasik* and *varsi* ceremonies at the end of the month, three months, six months and one year respectively are also performed along with ancestral worship.

The Anavils are mainly agriculturists with a large number of Anavils being land holders though some of them are engaged in both private and government jobs, trade and business. They depend entirely on the market for their daily requirements. During the agricultural season they also sell their produce to the local merchants directly.

The Anavils Jati Seva Mandal works towards the upliftment of the community by taking up programmes for the educational, social and economic development of the members. The Anavils also take the help of the statutory gram panchayat in case of conflicts, quarrels and other anti-social acts failing which they approach the nearest police station and court for justice.

They are followers of both the Vaishnavite and Shaivite sects of Hinduism. Their family diety is Suklaswar Mahadev though they also worship Kalka-mata, Krishna Bhagavan, Hanumanji, Ram and Sitla-mata etc. They visit Hindu religious shrines of Puri, Banares, Kedarnath, Badrinath. Holi, Deepawali, Janmastami are the major festivals. They avail of the services of Audhich Brahmans and Modh Brahmans in the performance of life-cycle rituals. They have faith in witchcraft and other malevolent forces. Some of their rituals are connected with agriculture. Cow is sacred to them and in the month of *Bhado* (August-September) their women worship the cow and observe fast.

Anavil women sing folk-songs at the time of marriage and other occasions. They have folk tales which relate the origin of the community. It is believed that they were all originally adivasis (tribals) raised to the status of Brahmans by Lord Ram after being given a ritual bath at the Unai-kund (hot spring) near Anaval village. These Brahman helped Lord Ram in his Yagna which he performed to purify himself for killing Ravana. This yagna was conducted under the guidance of Saravang Muni who lived at Anaval.

They accept both cooked and uncooked food from the other Brahman groups of the region. They also accept uncooked food from the Baniyas, Suthar, Kunbis and never accept any kind of food from the Vankars, Bhangis and Chamars. For economic reasons, they maintain close relations with the Dublas, Koli, Naika, Kokana and Dhodia who constitute the main force of agricultural labour. They share the facilities of well and other water resources, roads, school, panchayat office with other castes. Cultivator-labourer relationship exist in the society. The Anavils are one of the dominant communities in Gujarat. A large number of them today are businessmen, scholars, teachers, administrators, doctors, political leaders while some have also gone into the defence services.

With the advancement of the educational facilities in the villages and towns, the Anavils have made full use of it with education of women making tremendous strides since Independence. In fact most of the boys and girls study for post-graduate education. They are receptive to family welfare programmes. They make full use of facilities provided by the government for further development of agriculture. Their lands are well irrigated by canals and wells. They are self reliant by nature with a favourable attitude to wards savings and do not depend on money-lenders and shop-keepers for loans.

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ANSARI

The term Ansari in Arabic means one who helps others, which was given to the people of Medina in Saudi Arabia who helped Prophet Mohammed in his first religious war against Mecca in second Ramzan of 2 Hijri (Mohammed Haneef Ansari, 1981). It is believed that some of them came to Gujarat through Sindh but many more came from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh about 250-300 years ago. In Vadodara, they came as masons for the construction of state buildings from their native place in Rajasthan. Now a number of them are engaged in nickel plating of kitchen utensils. They believe that Julaha was the previous name of the community. The Ansari community consists mainly of four endogamous groups viz. Bijnoor Ansari, Ganga Parvala (from Gomtipur and its surroundings of UP), Delhiwala and those from Pratap Gadh and Allahabad of eastern UP. They are mainly distributed in the cities of Ahmedabad, Surat, Baroda, Bharuch and Rajpipla. Hindustani and Hindi and Gujarati are spoken at home and with others respectively. Gujarati script is used.

The Ansari community is non-vegetarian with beef (buffaloe). Wheat and rice are the staple food. Groundnut or Palmolin oil is used as cooking medium. Seasonally available vegetables, fruits, milk and tea are consumed. *Zarda* and *halva* are the sweets eaten during festive occasions.

The Ansaris suffix Shaikh to their names since the last fifty years. They recognize that the Syeds occupy a socially superior position than them. In relation to the Hindus, the Ansaris rank themselves lower than the Brahman and Patels but above the Harijans.

Marriages are performed as per the Shariat with a preference for first-cousin marriages. Girls and boys are married off at the age of 18 to 19 years and 20-21 years respectively. Monogamy is the only form of marriage practised. A widow is not supposed to wear glass bangles and coloured clothes. A fixed sum is paid as *mehar* before the *nikah* ceremony. Patrilocal residence is the rule

after marriage. Widow remarriage is allowed in which *devar vatta* (junior levirate) is also permissible. A divorcee also can marry again.

Joint family is the norm. *Parda* (veil) system is still prevalent amongst them and a woman has to observe *lajrakhna* (avoidance) in front of her father-in-law, husband's elder brother and all the elder male affinal relatives. All sons have the equal right of inheritance. The eldest son or another suitable son succeeds as the head of household on the death of their father.

The Ansari woman has a right of inheritance. She has equal rights in the social and religious spheres and her advice is accepted on many occasions. She has a vital role in the ritual performances and sings local folk songs to the beat of the *dholak*. But she has no role in the affairs of the *jamat*. She confines herself to the household duties though a few young women contribute to their family's income by discarding the *parda* and taking up employment.

Arranging the first delivery is the responsibility of the woman's parents. The delivery takes place in hospitals. The mother is treated as impure for forty days. *Fui* (child's father's sister) names the child on the sixth day after birth in a ceremony called *chatti*. *Sunnath* (circumcision) is also done by a doctor within two years of the birth of the male child. A few perform *aqiqa* ceremony by sacrificing a goat/sheep or two goats or sheeps in case of a girl or boy respectively.

Marriage alliances are initiated by the boy's father through third person. After the finalisation of the negotiation *sagai* (betrothal) ceremony is performed and formal announcement of the engagement is made in the presence of a few members of the *jamat*. The marriage rituals commence with the application of turmeric paste to both bride and groom three to seven days before the marriage. The *nikah* ceremony takes place after *asar namaj* (between 5 p.m to 6.p.m) proceeded by a feast in the afternoon followed by *valima dawat* in the same night by the groom's family. Nuptial ceremony takes place on the same night at the groom's house.

The dead are buried. Food is not cooked at the house of the deceased for three days. Mourning ends with the performance of *fateha* on *ziarat*. *Dasma*, *Beesma* and *chalisma* are performed respectively on tenth, twentieth and fortieth day and atleast two

or three male relatives visit graveyard once every day till the recitation of holy Koran for the eternal peace of the departed soul is over. This is followed by a feast. The death rites are concluded with the performance of *ziarat* (on the third day itself) in case of the death of a child below one year of age.

Weaving was the traditional occupation of the Ansari and at present a few living in Ahmedabad make their livelihood through this occupation with the help of power looms. Business is considered the primary means of livelihood as many of them operate hotels and bakeries. Some of them earn through petty business, private and government service and by teaching which are the subsidiary occupations for them. A few sell their finished cloth directly to the merchants but many are selling through commission agents. All economic transaction are in cash. With increasing competition from cotton textiles mills many of the Ansaris switched over to other jobs or business in the last four or five decades.

Depending upon their native state they have caste councils. For instance, those who came from UP have four elders living in Ahmedabad city for dealing with social and religious activities. They are affiliated to a *jamat* meant for 120 villages in UP. All these councils are affiliated to the Gujarat state Momin conference which in turn is affiliated to All India Momin confederation at Delhi. Rs. 2/- per member is collected annually towards membership fee. Persons involved in gambling, alcoholism and prostitution are socially boycotted if they refuse to pay fine. They are readmitted on rendering an unconditional apology by the father or an elder relative of the guilty. Except hereditary heads called *Choudhary* of eleven villages of Pratapgadh Ansari till late 1960, there is no other instance of the existence of traditional village panchayat for settling disputes owing to the community's urban orientation and habits. The role of modern statutory councils is mainly confined to plan and implement welfare activities in the community habitats.

The Ansaris are Sunnis. Some families have *pirs* from Saiyed community as spiritual guides and some visit their shrines. Members of the Ansari community do not visit sacred centres but some well-to-do Ansaris undertake the *Haj* pilgrimage. The services of any local *Moulana* (sacred specialist) for religious occasions

and services of *Bhangisab* from Fakir community for bathing the dead are availed of. Ramzan, Bakrid, Sabbe-Barat, Moharram are celebrated in accordance with Islamic traditions. *Tableek jamat* has considerable impact on some of the members of the community, besides becoming particular about attending prayers five times a day.

Manufacture of grey cloth on power looms is the main craft known by some Ansaris. The female members sing folk songs during rituals of birth and marriage.

As textile weavers and businessmen the Ansaris maintain social and occupational relations with several communities. Facilities of drinking water, road, school, public offices or places are shared with all the neighbouring communities and the graveyard is shared with other Muslim communities. A few members participate in political activities at local and state level. They are known to be economically prosperous.

The level of literacy on the whole is steadily increasing, though it is still low among females. Some of the few graduate males among them are employed in white collar jobs. The Ansari community has positive attitude towards family welfare programme making use of contraceptive devices in preference to undergoing sterilization operations. Almost all the houses of the Ansari community have the connections of drinking water and electricity. The Ansari community is aware of self employment schemes. The community is satisfied with the existing ration shops. Their attitude towards saving is favourable.

Both Momin and Ansari are aware of the fact that they are known by different names in different parts of India. Therefore to bring unity they formed an All India Momin conference in New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Shri Z.R. Ansari, the former Union Minister of State. Other objectives of the conference is to initiate reform and co-operation. Jamathul Ansari formed in late 1950 to discourage divorce. Talaq committee which also includes lady members adopt delaying tactics in granting divorce by increasing fine for divorce to Rs. 351/- from 51/- and following legal procedures as far as possible. They also formed a National committee at Ahmedabad in 1958 to bring social reforms and help the needy members with interest free loans and economic assistance to the poor widows and old people. Md. Azeez Mohidden

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ARAB

The Arab claim to have come from Sindh province through Kutch to Saurashtra and other parts of Gujarat in a *Laskar* (army platoon) of Mohammed Bin Kasim. A few of them were also invited to serve as security guards of royal treasuries of Bhavnagar and Jamnagar (Master Kareembhai, 1939). Hadaramowth city in Yaman is believed to be the native of many Arabs. They are also distributed in Junagadh, Bhavnagar, Panchmahal and Surat districts. Some families are there in Kerala and in cities of Hyderabad, Bangalore and Bombay. Their mother tongue is Urdu but they speak Gujarati in relation to others. The Gujarati script is used.

The Arab are non-vegetarian and live chiefly on wheat *roti* (unleavened bread), rice and butter milk in both the meals. Potato is the most commonly consumed vegetable. *Chana* (Bengal gram) and *moong* (green gram) are the pulses consumed. Ground nut oil is used as cooking medium. Seasonally available fruits like banana, *chiku*, mango and orange are eaten. Home made sweets of milk and wheat and sweet rice are taken on festive occasions.

The community has no divisions. But the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency (1899) reports that there are two divisions viz., Wilaitis (new comers) and Mirwallids (country-born). They consider themselves as Wilaitis, although sometimes they are referred to as Chavuse out of affection by Hindu communities especially by Rajputs. The community has 169 clans, like Akvon, Acari, Ansari, Anuj, Kathiri, Quresi etc. The clan names denote the territory or the ancestor's name. There is no hierarchy among the clans, but they do not accept girls from the Qureshi clan in which prophet Mohammed was born. Male members infix the term Bin while female members infix the term Binte (meaning daughter) to their names. Married women suffix husband's and father's name for official and community records respectively. They are placed after Hindu communities like Brahman, Lohana, Rajput etc. and the Syed are placed higher than them among the Muslims.

Marriages are performed as per Shariat. Brides are preferred from father's brother's daughter followed by mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter. They exchange girls with Muslim Pathans if they seek allances out of the community. Boys and girls are married in the age range of 22-24 and 18-20 years respectively. All the marriages are arranged by the parents. Monogamy is the common form of marriage, although one can have more than one wives as per Shariat. Widowed women do not wear *Nak-ka-dana* (nose ring) and bangles. A fixed amount of Rs.27.25 or 151/- is paid towards *mehar* before the *nikah*. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriage. Items of domestic use are given to the daughter. Divorce and subsequent remarriage are permissible. Divorcee and widowed woman has to observe the period of *Iddat* if she wants to remarry. She is paid maintenance allowance. The amount paid for maintenance vary. In some cases *nikah* is performed after *Isha namaj* (night prayer) at the mosque instead of at the bride's residence.

Both collateral and vertical extended families followed by nuclear families are prevalent. The parents stay with the youngest son. Married woman avoids all her male affinal relatives who are elder to her husband. Both sons daughters are given a share in the ancestral property. The eldest son succeeds the father after the death of the latter.

The woman does not enjoy equal status. She has little role in social and political spheres. She has a right of inheritance. She confines herself to household duties. She takes active part in the ritual spheres. She is consulted in many of the social activities of the household.

The first delivery is arranged by the parents of the woman at home with the help of *dai* (local mid-wife from Muslim community). The mother is treated as impure for twelve weeks for religious purposes. Child is given name by his / her father's sister within 24 hours of the birth and for which she is rewarded suitably. *Hajam* (barber) does the circumcision of the male child of below two years of age. *Aquiqa* ceremony is observed by the affluent within four to six days of the circumcision.

Marriage negotiations are initiated by the boys side. Engagement takes place in the presence of *Jamat* members by the members of the boys' party at the girl's house. All the members of *jamat* are

invited to the *nikah* ceremony. Groom's parents arrange a feast in the afternoon and the bride's party arrange another feast in the night after *nikah*. Nuptial ceremony is arranged on the same night at groom's house. A few affinal kin invite the newly married couple for a feast on four *Jummagi* (Fridays). The married daughter along with her husband is invited by her father on first Id after marriage and some gifts are given to the couple.

The dead are buried within three hours of death by informing the *jamat* for necessary help and co-operation. *Ziarat*, *dasmi*, *beesmi* and *chehalem* are observed on the third, tenth, twentieth and fortieth day of death respectively and are performed as per Islamic tradition. *Barasee* (anniversary) is also performed.

The Arab community is mainly landless. Military and security services in the army of the rulers of Jamnagar, Junagadh and Bhavnagar were the traditional occupations of the community. Even now quite a few of them have been serving as security guards in Banks and in Police and Defence departments. However, some of them are now also employed in government and semi-government institutions which is supplemented by petty trade.

The Arab have an well organised *Arab Jamat* and *Akhil Gujarat Arab Samaj* at local and State level managed by a board or committee consisting of five to seven members elected once in three years through secret ballot. Two members from each local *Jamat* elect the office bearers of state level council whose headquarter is situated at Bhavnagar. Office bearers of the local *Jamat* meet once in two months or three months to review the activities of the community. Besides discouraging divorce, the caste council pays school fees, provides books upto college level free of cost to all the children of the community from the amount they receive in the form of membership fee of Rs.1.00 per family per month towards local *jamat* and Rs.2/- per family per year towards state level caste council and rent of rooms/houses (i.e. property) owned by the caste councils. The state caste council has been attempting to arrange for *samuha lagan* (community marriages) in order to reduce the expenditure occurring during marriages. Neither of the caste councils has the power of imposing punishment on the deviant members. The community being an urban group, modern statutory councils like Nagar Palika or Nagar Panchayats have no specific role in their social life.

The Arab belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. A few visit the shrines of Ajmer and Bombay and undertake Haj pilgrimage. They employ locally available *Moulvi* (sacred specialist), or *Shehare_Qazi* (Muslim priest appointed by Government to maintain marriage records) for the performance of all life-cycle rituals and Nikah respectively. They celebrate festivals like Ramzan, Bakrid, Milad-ul-Nabi etc. in accordance with Islamic traditions. Only younger generation of the community have developed some interest towards *Tableekh Jamat*.

The Arab community being a service class maintains social and occupational relations with the surrounding communities for their livelihood. They have intimate relation with other Muslim communities in the religious sphere. Commensal relations are confined to only those communities professing Islam. And connubial relation is restricted only to Pathan Muslims. Facilities of road, entry to school, temple, panchayat ghar, government offices and public places are shared with all the communities.

The level of literacy is low and especially among the females. There are very few graduates, doctors and lawyers. Deliveries are mostly confined to their homes. They have been enjoying modern communication facilities being an urban group. Children studying in Primary Schools have been enjoying mid-day meal. Very few have savings bank accounts and needy people are getting loans from nearby banks.

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ATTARWALA

The Attarwalas claim their origin from the Moguls of Hazara city, on the border of Afganisthan and Iran, who came to Agra to serve as soldiers during the regime of Moghul emperor Jahangir. According to their recorded documents, they migrated to Ahmedabad via Gwalior, Ratlam and Godhra when they were massacred by the British for their active participation in the first war of independence in 1857. They took up the occupation of selling perfumes, they are also known as Kanmelia (who cleans ear) by the neighbouring communities. At the time of partition a few families went to Pakistan while mostly moved from Agra city to Gujarat. This was the second influx. The community has no marital relations with the Attarwala of Pakistan. The Attarwala are distributed in Ahmedabad city. Urdu is their mother tongue and the Urdu script is largely used within the community. The Gujarati language and script are used for communicating with others.

The Attarwalas are non-vegetarians. Wheat is the cereal they use. Pulses such as *tur*, *moong* and *chana* are commonly taken. Groundnut oil is the cooking medium. They hardly consume milk and fruits. Beef is increasingly popular than mutton. On festive occasions sweets such as *shrikhand* and *halwa* are consumed.

The Attarwalas has fourteen lineages (khandan) like Peer Baksh, Ammer Ali, Khorata, Mandusa, Hussainsa, Zahur Haussain, Mohammed Hussain, Khodar Baksh, Badkhan, Mashboob Khan, Gulam Hussain etc. grouped under four original *ataks* (clans) of Zahuri, Sathnami, Bakhalwala and Mhanderwala. The lineages are named after the heads of households. Owing to their urban habitation, it is difficult to ascertain the position of the Attarwala in local social hierarchy. They claim to be at par with other Muslim communities and above the Harijans.

First Parallel cousins on the paternal side and cross cousins on the maternal are preferred as mates. Marriageable age for girls vary between 18-20 years and for boys between 20-22 years

respectively. Marriages are arranged by parents and elders and monogamous marriages are the norm. A sum of Rs.127.50 towards *meher* is promised and will be paid only in case of divorce which is however rare in the community because the Jamat tries to settle the marital problems amicably. Both widows and widowers as well as the divorces can remarry. A married woman do not have any specific symbol but a widow has to give up the wearing of bangles. Patrilocal residence is the post-marital practice.

Nuclear family is most prevalent among the Attarwalas. Owing to shortage of space and high rents, father and married sons or married brothers share the same roof but have separate hearths. Some have moved out to the Shaalam locality in recent years. A daughter-in-law avoids her father-in-law or elder brother-in-law. Male equigeniture govern's the rule of inheritance with the eldest son succeeding as head of the household on the death of his father. Because of the small size of the community and the compactness of its distribution, closeness prevails amongst its members especially in matters of religion and ritual.

The Attarwala women have no right of inheritance. They contribute considerably to the family income by earning as labourers and sewing clothes within the household. They have control over all household expenditure and they play a vital role in ritual as well. Bringing up of children are regarded as their primary responsibilities.

Marriage alliances are initiated by the bride's father. The *sagai* (bethrothal ceremony) is held in which sweets are distributed among the community elders and members of the *jamat*. The marriage ceremony itself can last between five to seven days beginning with the applying of turmeric paste to both the bride and the groom concluding with *nikah*. The Nikah is officiated by the *Pashimans* after *isha namaj* (night prayer) preceded by a feast. After the *nikah* paternal and maternal uncles of the bride invite the couple on four successive Fridays, called *Jummagi*. Nuptial takes place at the groom's house.

The expectant mother is given the gift of a set of clothes and some ornaments for the child by her father. The mother is regarded as impure for forty days. The child is given its name by the father's sister (*Fui*) on the sixth day after bath, the *Chatti* is observed on this day. A Hajam does the circumcision of the male

child at the age ranging from four months to five years. *Aqiqa* ceremony, is performed either on the fourth day or the fourth month or fourth year after birth.

The dead are buried. Mourning concludes with the *ziarat* ceremony (on third day) during which period no food is cooked in the house of the deceased. *Dasma*, *beesama*, *mahina* and *chalisma* are performed on the tenth, twentieth, thirtieth, and fortieth day after death with the recitation of the holy Koran. *Chai mahi* (six months) and *barasee* (anniversary) are observed. Only *ziarat* is performed in the case of death of child below five years.

The Attarwalas are a landless community earning their livelihood exclusively by selling perfumes (*attar*). Now many ply autorickshaws and have taken up the work of *kalai* (zinc coat of cooking vessels) while only a few practising the traditional vocation. They depend on the market for their day-to-day requirements.

The community has a registered *jamat* (Council) called Shia Jaffer Attarwala Jamat which is managed by fourteen members. Each *khandan* has one member as its representative. The executive committee is selected every three years in a function on in which adult male members participate and contribute Rs.1/- as membership fee. Besides serving as an institution of social control, the *jamat* runs a *madrassa* for religious teaching to children and conducts tailoring classes for its womenfolk. *Jamat* has no power of imposing fines on defaulters. Prior to 1964, they had a hereditary chief as head of the community called *choudhary*.

The Attarwalas are Shias and follow the preaching of only twelve Imams. They go on pilgrimage to Ajmer Shareef and the shrine of Kajinoorulla Sustri's in Agra. They employ any Shia *moulavi* (sacred specialist) for leading the *namaz* (prayer), *Majlees* (religious congregation) and for *nikah*. Besides *Ramzan*, and *Bakrid* they celebrate Shab-be-Barat, Shab-be-Khadar and Shab-be-Meraj. They observe mourning for forty days. During first eight days, ladies wear especially black glass bangles as a mark of respect to the sacrifice of Hazarat Hussain.

The women sing local Gujarati folk songs and also Hindi film songs during marriage.

As perfume sellers, they have socio-economic relations with several communities. Acceptance/exchange of water and food is confined to the neighbouring Muslim communities. Facilities of

drinking water are available to them. They use common graveyard along with Sunni Muslims. Political participation is confined to exercising their franchise in the elections.

Levels of literacy is very low among them. Boys drop out even at the primary level to support the family and girls are not encouraged to receive formal education. The Attarwalas avail of medical facilities and they limit their family to four children. Some of the Attarwalas have also availed of loans from public sector banks for the purchase of autos, thelas etc. by mortgaging their property. They are exposed to mass media through radios, transistors.

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AUDICHAYA BRAHMAN

The Audichaya Brahman have a wide distribution but their main concentration is in Ahmedabad, Mehsana, Kheda, Bharuch, Surendranagar, Sabarkantha, and Panchemahal districts. According to historical records, they were brought to Gujarat by Mulraj Solanki the ruler of Anhilpur Patan between 960 and 955 A. D. 'Audich' in Sanskrit means north. So the Brahmins invited by Mulraj from Northern India came to be known as 'Audichya Brahmins'. They are also called 'Audichaya Sahastra'.

The Audichaya Brahman families invited from different regions of Northern India consisted of 105 from Prayag Kshetra. 100 from the Ashram of Chavyan Rishi, 100 families from the bank of the river Saryau; 200 from Kannauj, 100 'Kashi Kshetra' 100 'Haridwar'; 100 from 'Kurukshetra'; 100 from 'Naimishaarnya'; and 132 from Pushkar Kshetra. Thus, a total of 1037 families of learned Brahmins were invited for participation in the Rudra Mahalaya and Rydra Yagna performed by Prince Mulraj Solanki. It is said that a group of 1000 Audichaya Brahman accepted the gifts offered by king Mulraj and their descendants are known as Audichaya 'Shashtra Brahmins. Of the remaining group of 37 Brahmins. Mulraj and his ministers divided them into different groups according to their merit and their Vedic knowledge.

The Audichya Brahmins have a number of *gotras*. The *gotras* are Vatsa, Bhargava, Dalabhya, Dron, Maunas, Gangayan, Sankratrutya, Sankruit, Panlastya, Mandakya, Shaunak, Bhardwaj, Kaudinya, Artio, Krushnatri, Swetatri, Chandratri, Gautam, Kutsas, Anfiras, Vashishtha, Upmanu, Udvah-Audvah, Parashas, Laugashi, Kashyap, Shandilya, Gabhil, Pipplad, Udalak, Audalals, Garga, Kaushik and Hirnyagarbh. There are more than sixty different *ataks* among the Audichaya Brahmins. These *atak* names which are used as surnames are based on their profession and field of proficiency. The most common among them are Dave, Pandya, Thaker, Udadhhyaya or Aupadhaya, Trivedi, Jani, Pandit, Acharya, Raval, Joshi etc. Earlier there were only 16 surnames

but in course of time the number went upto 60. The Brahmans who studied and taught the Vedas to other Brahmans were known as Acharya. The Brahmans who study and teach the Vedas in different regions came to be known as Upadhyayas are also referred to as Ozas, Pundits, Pathaks and Pandas. The Brahmans serving Rajput kings at the marriages of princes and princesses were called Purohits irrespective of their original surnames. Brahmans residing in Panchal Pradesh were called 'Pancholi' while those who were well versed in Astrology are known as Joshis. Thakar Brahmans were those who gave up their original vocation to manage their villages. The Brahmans who possessed the knowledge of all the four Vedas were known as Chaturvedis, those who possessing the knowledge of three Vedas became Trivedis or Tripathis and those familiar only with two Vedas are called Dwivedi and Dave. The Brahmans doing clerical work were called Mehtas and those who were experts in making preparations for Yagna were called Yagnik. The Brahmans possessing knowledge of the Vedas were called Vyas. One can understand that the community self perception of its status is on a pride in occupying the biggest position in the varna hierarchy.

The Audichaya Brahman are pure vegetarians. They use rice, wheat, bajra (millet) and jowar as their staple food. They take a wide variety of pulses of which *tuvar* is most popular. All locally available vegetables including roots and tubers find a place in their diet which also includes milk and its products. On festive and ceremonial occasions a variety of sweets, *ladwa dudh pak* (rice boiled in milk,) *suo*, pure *farsan* (fried preparations) are prepared. They keep away from alcohol, some smoke *bidi* or cigarettes and they also chew tobacco and betelnuts. Women sometimes use snuff.

The Audichaya Brahman practises endogamy at the community level and exogamy at the gotra level. The community is characterized by an internal social hierarchy with those belonging to Siddhpur occupying the highest position, followed by those of the Zalawad region and below them are those belonging to the Sihor- Kathiawad region. Formerly, these sections had commensal relations but did not exchange brides. Now these restriction are not observed. But they follow *sapinda* and *pravar* exogamy.

Monogamy is the norm. Widow marriage is prohibited. The girls are married off between 18 to 25 years and the marriage age for

boys ranges from 21-28 years. Dowry in the form of gifts are given as '*streedhan*' to the daughter. Junior sororate is in practice. Marriage alliances are largely settled by negotiations. The symbols of marriage for women include the wearing of *mangalsutra*, toe-rings and the *bindi* on the forehead. The rule of residence is patrilocal though neolocal is also present. Divorce is customarily not permissible, but one can get divorce through law courts. Reason for divorce include barrenness, maladjustment and chronic sickness. In case of divorce, children usually becomes the liability of the father.

In rural areas the extended family is common but in urban areas the number of nuclear families is on the rise. Avoidance relationship is maintained between daughter-in-law and father-in-law but joking relationship exist between elder brother's wife and husband's younger brother and also between elder sister's husband and wife's younger sister. Property inheritance follows the principle of male equigeniture though now daughters are also given a share. The eldest son succeeds the father.

Women play an active role in social functions, in family rituals and also in political affairs. They now actively contribute to the family income and also control family expenditure. In the rural areas they are in animal husbandry and are also involved in fetching potable water. They play an active role in decision making.

In case of first pregnancy, the *simant* ceremony is performed in the eight month. The expectant woman offers worship to *Randal Mada*. This is followed by the *kholbharana* ceremony on the same day in which a married woman who had never lost a child either in post or pre-natals puts some rice, coconut and small sugar cubes in the lap of the prospective mother. This is repeated five times. This ceremony is followed by a feast. Delivery of the child takes place in the residence of the woman's parents. Assistance of a trained mid-wife is sought in the rural areas while in the cities it takes place in hospitals or nursing homes. The *chatti vidhi* ceremony takes place on the sixth day in which the child is given a bamboo stick out of the belief that God prescribes the destiny of the child on this day. Post-natal pollution for the child lasts for ten days while for the mother it extends to forty days. On an auspicious day, *namanidharan* (naming ceremony) is performed and it is the *fui* (father's sister) who selects the name for which

she is given a gift in cash and kind. The *annaprashan* takes place after six months. The baby is given solid food for the first time in the form of a porridge. The *mundan* (tousure) ceremony is performed only in case of a male child three or five years. Between of 7 to 9 years of age for a boy the *Yajnopavit sanskar* (sacred thread) investiture is celebrated.

The betrothal ceremony is performed once the negotiation is finalized. The marriage rituals initiate with *komku petri* or preparing the schedule of rituals. Lord Ganesh is installed and worshipped. This is followed by *pithi* (anointing turmeric paste) to the bride and the groom in their respective houses. Marriage is solemnised at the bride's house. The groom is welcomed by the bride's mother. *Kanyadan* takes place then under the marriage booth. The bride and the groom circumambulate the sacrificial fire. A feast is arranged. Next day the groom returns to his house with the bride where consummation of marriage takes place.

Children who die before teething are buried, but in the case of deaths occurring at a later age, cremation is practised. On the tenth day, all the male members on the paternal as well as maternal sides remove their beards and moustaches. On the eleventh day, a *shradha* ceremony is observed on the bank of a river or a pond near a temple. On the twelfth day and on the thirteenth day, *pret* (spirits) and *pitru* (ancestor) *shradhas* are performed respectively and lastly the *pind-vedhan* ceremony is performed. The *shraddha* ceremony is conducted by the family priest. The bones of the deceased are immerred in the Ganga water at Prayag or Allahabad. The final *Pitru Gaya Shraddha* is performed at Prayag and *Matru Gaya Shraddha* is performed at Siddhpur.

The traditional occupation of Audichaya Brahmins was performance of priestly duties. Later on, they also took to agriculture, while some also work as astrologers. Today the community is characterized by remarkable departure and Audichaya Brahmins are to be found in diverse professions, services and vocations. Even the women have taken to variety of jobs, such as teaching, development workers, health workers, as medical practitioners, etc. Most of them belong to middle class but quite a large number of them are affluent. Those still following priestly occupation receive payment both in cash and kind.

The community has the caste councils at the village and regional levels. These settle disputes amongst its members. In cities and towns disputes are mainly settled with the help of close kin. The Audichaya Brahmans has formed a caste association known as Sattar Taluka. These caste associations are oriented towards bringing reform in society, assist members to negotiate and settle marriage alliances, and help children of poor families in their educational development. These associations also settle cases of divorce and remarriage. Some also seek legal remedies. In villages, statutory panchayats exist which look after the development of the area. Audichaya Brahmans actively participate in the activities of such councils and derive full advantage from it.

Audichaya Brahmins earlier practise only interdining with other Brahman sub-sects. They accept food and water from upper castes and clean castes. They have linkages with the service castes and other high castes. Customarily they do not accept food and water from scheduled castes. But the rigidity is being relaxed particularly in urban areas. They actively participate in politics at the local level and regional levels. There are professionals and administrators and have linkages with a wide range of communities.

The level of education among them is quite high. Traditionally they were and are the literate section achieving very high standard of intellect. Boys and girls are taking to higher studies alike. They are well acquainted with the modern medicare and use this though they have not abandoned the domestic remedies. The Audichyas have positive attitude towards family welfare programmes. They rely more on self reliance. They are mostly self employed. Also they have access to mass media. They have drinking water facilities. Kerosene oil, fire wood, liquified petroleum gas etc. are used as fuel. Most of their houses be it in urban or rural areas have electricity connections. They avail of the banking facilities. Also they make purchases from fair price shops.

Harshida Dave

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BAFAN

The Bafan, claim that they have descended from the Thaima Muslim community of Sind who migrated to their present habitat a few centuries ago. They were engaged in Maldhari (cattle breeding) activity. The word 'Bafan' in Kachchi means boiling and the term was applied to the ancestors of the Bafan when they came across the meat of goat/sheep being boiled in their encampments at Nagiari village. They are a small community mainly distributed in Kutch district. They are also reported to be in Jamnagar as well as in Sabarkantha district.

Kachchi is the mother tongue of the Bafans which they also speak with outsiders though Bafan males speak a corrupt form of Gujarati with the local officials. They use Gujarati script. A few understand elementary Hindi.

They are non-vegetarian. Mutton, chicken and eggs and on rare occasions beef is also consumed. *Rotis* made out of Bajra flour along with *chutney* made of dried chillies is their staple food. Potato and onion are the most commonly consumed. They drink milk or buttermilk after meals. *Chana*, *mung*, occasionally *tur* are pulses popular among the Bafan. The groundnut oil is the cooking medium. *Meetha chaval* (sweet rice) is taken on festive occasions.

The community has four lineages called Makani, Aliyoni, Jassoni and Issocuola. Each of these live in a particular locality known as *Falia*. The Bafans regards themselves as socially equal to the neighbouring communities. Other rank them above Koli and Harijan but below those considered clean castes.

Marriages take place as per the rules prescribed in the Shariat. They can be performed throughout the year except in the month of Moharrum and Teratejl. Preferred partners are first cousins, parallel on the paternal and also on the maternal side. Marriage by mutual exchange are also practised; 15 to 16 and 18 to 21 years for girls and boys respectively is considered as the ideal marriageable age. Marriages are arranged through negotiation. Monogamy is the usual form. A few cases of polygynous union

have been recorded which are viewed as a symbol of prestige and sometimes for a male issue. A silver or golden *siri*, (nose ring) is the symbol of a married woman. A widow is required to wear usually white clothes. A sum of Rs. 50-500 towards *mehar* is paid before the *Nikah*. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriage. Divorce can be obtained on grounds of maladjustment between the spouses, impotency of male and adulterous conduct of females. Divorcees, widow and widower can marry again. But this should not exceed four times in the case of women.

Most of the families are nuclear followed by vertically extended families. Very few alone women households are also there. Both inheritance and succession is through the male line. The Bafans are known to interact cordially both amongst themselves and with neighbouring Muslim communities. They have interactions with whom they serve as agricultural labourers.

Women occupy an inferior social position. She has no right to inheritance. Women contribute to the family income as agricultural labourers and also as labourers in stone quarrying. She is not only confined to household level activities but also makes it known that she is entitled to education atleast till she reaches the menarchial age so that she can move out of the village and take up employment.

The parents of the expectant mother arrange for the first delivery which takes place either at the house or in case of complexity, in nearby hospitals. Pollution lasts for a period raging from six to forty days depending on whenever the mother washes her hair independently after delivery. A temporary name is proposed for the child by the baby's father's sister on 'Chhatti' (sixth day after birth) ceremony and the final name is selected by the Muzhavar (priest/saint) of the shrine of Veerapeer. Circumcision, between the ages of two to five years of male child is performed by a Hazam.

Matrimonial alliance initiated by the groom's father is followed by the *Sagai* (betrothal) ceremony after the finalisation of the match. This ceremony is attended by atleast six members including one or two woman from groom's party. They present a pair of clothes and sweets to the bride. A night before the *Nikah*, *Qavali* is arranged both at the house of the bride and groom called *Shou ki rat*. All the relatives contribute some money or gifts in order to

reduce the burden of expenditure to the extent possible. After paying Mehar, Nikah is performed at the bride's house. After a feast, bride is escorted to her husband's house where the nupitals take place. After three to five days she is sent to her parent's house for six to seven days stay. After that she returns permanently to her husband's home.

Within six hours of death, the dead are buried in accordance with Islamic tradition. *Ziarat* on the third, *dasma* on tenth and *Chalisma* on fortyeighth day of death are performed. A feast is arranged for all assembled relatives on *Chalisma*. The first anniversary ceremony is performed by the feeding of five to ten poor children in the memory of the dead.

Land is the major economic resource of the Bafan for the majority depend on agriculture for their livelihood. A few have access to irrigation facilities from the wells. They are marginal farmers. Mainly they earn as farm labouress. Some work in stone quarrying. The finished stone slabs are transported in camel carts owned by them. *Maladhari* (cattle herding) was the traditional occupation which is still carried on by a few families. Land remains the same in proportion to growth of population and hence children are forced to seek work when they attain the age of 10-12 years to support their families. Bulk of the community have switched over from the traditional occupation of *Maldhari* to agriculture and other miscellaneous jobs.

The Bafan community has a caste council, Nagiari Jamat to settle disputes between its members. It consists of an *Agevan* (President), *Patel* with four to five members represented from the four different lineages *falias*. All the members are unanimously selected permanently. The *jamat* has a representation at the district level in the Muslim Education and Social Welfare Society, Bhuj, a registered body looking into the general welfare of the Muslim communities. This body provides free boarding and lodging to poor boys coming from areas other than Bhuj town. Previously the Bafans had the traditional village panchyat and its head called *patel* or *jamohtar* who used to be assisted by two or three elders. His decision was binding and was accepted by all the villagers. With the introduction of Panchayati Raj system, the traditional village panchayat has been replaced by the Nagiari Jamat.

The Bafan professes Islam and belong to Sunni sect. The

community worships Veerapeer for performing rituals like *mundan*. The shrine is situated within the boundary of the habitat. The day of *Urs* (fair) of the saint falls on first Monday of the month of Badra. They have great regard for Khazakassim Peer. The shrine is believed to have been in existence ever since immemorial. They visit the shrines of Hazipeer and Bokhari Peer of Mundra on pilgrimage, but very few undertake Haj pilgrimage. They have a *Miyajee* (sacred specialist from Quareshi community) who officiate in life cycle rituals. He is also teaches at Madrasa. Festivals like Ramzan, Bakrid and Moharrum are celebrated.

The Bafan have occupational dependence on Leva Patels and Rajputs of the neighbouring villages. They accept only vegetarian food from the Rajputs though they accept non-vegetarian food from other Muslims. The Patels or Rajputs do not accept food from them. The Bafan seat separately when they attend the marriages of Leva Patel. Drinking water is given to Bafan without allowing them to touch the water container. The Bafan share wells and water facilities with other Muslims. Road, school and Panchayat office are shared with all the other communities. The participation of the community in political activities is confined to the local level only. The community is not free from the taint of its past record of criminal activities as a result of which till recently they used to be arrested on the slightest suspicion of their involvement in offences occurring in the neighbouring villages.

The community has not been able to utilize the education facilities available. The boys of 12-13 years old start assisting the father in stone quarrying and processing or agricultural activities. Very few boys study beyond the third standard. They avail of modern medical facilities. They have a positive approach towards family planning and quite a few women are availing of the facilities of contraception. Their habitat has drinking water facilities and a post office. School going children of the community benefit from the mid-day meals scheme. They avail of the public distribution system and a few houses are also electrified.

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BAHURUPI

The Bahurupis are the nomads from Maharashtra, who put on many roles. Their families are very few in Gujarat who roam from village to village, sometimes without their family members. Enthoven (1921) "Bahurupis are also known as Bhorpis, a clan of strolling dramatic players, recorded in small numbers, numbering 641 (333 males and 308 females) at the Census 1901 in Ahmedabad, Surat besides the districts of Deccan, Konkan and Karnatak." They are also distributed in Maharashtra state. They claim that they can enact as many as 52 roles and trace their origin to the first two sons of goddess Parvati, Jumwa and Chumme. They were employed as spies to collect information, during King Shivaji's reign. The exact status of the Bahurupis in the local hierarchy is difficult to determine as they are migrants and nomads in Gujarat. They speak Marathi, Kathiawadi (a dialect spoken in Saurashtra region) and Hindi. Males of their community can be identified by the gaudy make-up and the masks which they put on when they are on their errands.

They are vegetarians and their diet consists of wheat, rice all kinds of vegetables and pulses, fruits. Milk, however is rarely consumed. Liquor consumption is common and it is procured from the market. Enthoven (1921) states that they eat flesh except beef and pork.

The community is divided into exogamous septs, the names of which are used as surnames. These septs which can roughly be treated as lineages have equal in status in relation to each other. They consider themselves to be Marathas and are indifferent to the Varna system, although other communities consider them Sudras.

Community endogamy is strictly enforced but persons from the same sept or lineage are not allowed to marry each other. The system of cross-cousin marriage is practised. The marriageable age ranges from 18-20 years for males and 15-17 years for females. Marriage is arranged through negotiation. Polygyny and levirate

marriages are not allowed but sorrorate at junior level is permissible. *Mangal-sutra* (marriage pendant) and *jadava* (silver rings) on the second toe are the symbols of marriage for women. Both the system of bride-price and dowry exist. Divorce is permissible and obtainable on the basis of a compensation of Rs.1,000/- paid by husband if he seeks divorce and if a female seeks, she has to pay Rs.500/- as compensation. Remarriage for divorcees, widow and widowers is permitted.

Joint or extended types of families are common. Avoidance relations exist between the elder brother-in-law, father-in-law and daughter-in-law. Joking relations are maintained with the wife's younger sibs and with cross-cousins. Inheritance, descent and succession are in the male line. They have some inter-family linkages when they stay in their native place.

Women do not have a right to paternal property. They are engaged in agricultural labour work but they are not allowed to work in traditional occupation of *Bahurupi*. Collection of potable water and fuel is generally done by them. They have an equal role in the ritual and religious spheres and they enjoy the same responsibility in the management of the family and their consent is sought for every important decision within the family.

In the eighth month of the first pregnancy, a ceremony takes place as part of pre-delivery rituals in which the lap of the pregnant woman is filled with gifts by her mother at her in-law's house. On the fifth day after the birth of the child, a ceremony is performed and on the completion of one and a quarter months, the baby is named. On the first menstruation of girls, a ten day pollution period which concludes with ritual worship of Goddess *Shavitri* by the girl's mother, and pollution lasts three days after subsequent menstruation. Marriage is presided over by a Brahmin priest and it is solemnized in accordance with the Sanskritic rituals. On death, the dead is bathed and wrapped in new clothes and carried in a *dholi* made of bamboo to the burial ground. It is buried with salt and a *Samadhi* is erected on the grave. Mortuary rites are observed on the eleventh day and periodically the soul of the dead is offered balls of rice.

They can enact fifty-two different roles. On each given day, the *Bahurupi* puts on a role and roams around the village collecting alms. Every *Bahurupi* specializes in five to ten roles which

constitutes his reportage as he moves from one village to another confining for a fortnight in each. In Maharashtra, they are given cereals as alms, so they prefer migrating to Gujarat where they can get alms in cash. Bahurupis own some cultivable land in their native village which is cultivated by other members of the family especially the women-folk. In recent times people of other castes have also poached with the traditional vocation of the Bahurupi community.

The caste council in their native habitat is a strongbody. A *pramukh* is elected every year and he is assisted by a few elders of the community. Every Bahurupi has to report to his *pramukh* about his movement, earnings and expenditure and every wayward member is punished by ostracism or by fine in cash.

Bahurupis themselves manufacture the masks which are part of their professional equipment. Paper and tamarind seeds are soaked in water and boiled together till it becomes a homogenous mixture which is moulded into different shapes. These masks have great sanctity and they cannot be simply discarded or sold to others. If a mask is broken, it is immersed in the river ceremoniously and a feast is given to the children on that occasion.

Bahurupis worship goddess Saraswati as the patron deity for she is believed to be the goddess of kala or art. Every lineage also has its individual deity worshipped on all important occasions. Besides, they also worship Ganapathi, Shiva, Ram, Krishna and other wider pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses. They celebrate Vinayaka Chaturthi, Shivaratri, Holi, Navaratri and other Hindu festivals. Local Brahmins are their sacred specialists. There are many folk tales and folk songs that are specific to the community.

They lead an isolated existence on their sojourns in different villages but they maintain contact with the Bhands of Gujarat. Bahurupis are regarded for their art, they are never sent away without alms. By tradition, they avoid taking food, water or alms from scheduled castes. But they accept everything from all other castes.

Most Bahurupis are illiterate. They depend on indigenous medical practices to a great extent for the cure of their ailments. Many have undergone sterilization under the modern family welfare programmes. During their wanderings they stay under a tree or

take shelter in the courtyard of a willing patron, although they own houses in their native habitats. They own small plots of land economically unviable. Bahurupis on the move cannot take provisions from the public distribution system.

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BAIRAGI BAWA

The name 'Bairagi Bawa' has been derived from the term *bairagaya* or *tyag* (sacrifice). They are people who have taken a vow of *bairagaya* and hence are called Bairagi. The community has a mixed origin in that all those people from different castes who regarded themselves as followers of and followed the precepts of Adi-Shankaracharya and who took to *sanyas* regard themselves as Bairagi-Bawa. Enthoven (1920) writes that Bairagi term applied to a sect of Vaishnavites. Some of them roam and wear a *bhangwa* coloured cloth while some settle with their families at one place generally near a temple. At present most of them have settled in and around different temples. There are Adit Bawa, Dasnami, Goswami, Ramanndi, Magri and Bairagi. They generally referred to as Bawa which means a saint-beggar. They were believed to be the followers of Adi-Shankaracharya and took to *Sanyas* though later they entered into matrimonial alliances. They are distributed all over the state. They speak Gujarati and write in the Gujarati or Devnagiri script. Some of them can also speak Hindi. Their males have special dress by which one can easily identify them. Those who have settled as *grahasthi* wear *dhoti* and *chadder* and white coloured *rudraksha mala* on their neck. The *sanyasis* wear *bhagua* coloured *dhoti* and *chadar*, *rudrakshamala* on their neck and copper bangles on their right wrist and also wear *kanpin*, (small piece of undergarment) and *jata* (matted hair). The *kanpin* and the colour of the *dhoti* helps differentiate them from the settled Bairagi-Bawa.

Traditionally, the Bairagi Bawa are non-vegetarians though avoiding pork and beef; now most of them prefer vegetarian food especially those settled in the different temple complexes with their families. Their staple food is *bajra*, *jowar*, wheat and rice depending on what they receive in alms. They consume all types of pulses and seasonal vegetables. Consumption of milk and milk products are rare. Some of them take liquor and almost all the male Bairagi-Bawa are addicted to *ganja* (hashis).

They are divided into different *ataks* (clans) on the basis of villages from which they originally hailed. There are different categories like Atit Bawa, Margi, Dasnami, Puri, Giri etc.

Consanguineous marriages with first cross cousins, mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's son, is preferred. *Atak* exogamy is strictly observed. Marriages are arranged through negotiation. Marriageable age for boys being 18 to 20 years and for girls 16 to 18 years. After marriage residence is patrilocal. Junior and senior levirate, sororate unions are allowed. Married woman wear a full sari and observe *lajkarna/pardha* (veil) in front of her elders at her in-laws house. Divorce (*chuta-cheda*) is allowed and after divorce or death of spouse one can remarry. For *ghargharenu* (remarriage) elaborate rituals are not observed and is done in the dead of night with a limited number of close relatives and that would be disclosed to other villagers only the next morning. The Margi, Ramanandi and Dasnami exchange brides with the Bairagi Bawa. A system of bride price is now in vogue. Group marriages take place in the community.

Both extended and nuclear type of families prevail amongst them. Joking relations exist between Dyer-bhattu (husband's younger brother and elder brother's wife). Avoidance relations exist between daughter-in-law and other elderly male members of the family. Obligatory relations is maintained between son-in-law and father-in-law and other elderly male members of the family. Avoidance relations are also present between son-in-law and mother-in-law. Inheritance of property is through the male line based on equigeniture. Succession is through the eldest son. Inter-family linkages are maintained. The eldest son takes the charge as *pujari* in the temple following father's death.

The Status of Bairagi Bawa woman is lower than man. Sometimes women also take charge of the temple after her father's or husband's death and supplement the family income.

During menstrual period female has to observe pollution and isolation lasting five to six days. *Khoda-bharva* ceremony performed during the seventh month of first pregnancy. The woman goes to her natal house for delivery which takes place with the assistance of local midwife. After birth the child is bathed and mother herself takes a ritual bath on the sixth day, called *chatti*. Child is named by Fui (Father, sister) according to priest's calculations. Five weeks

birth pollution comes to an end after the *jal-puja* ceremony. On the same day, mundan ceremony (tonsure) in the case of the male child is also performed by very few. Only margin group wear *Jhenoi* (the sacred thread).

Marriage negotiations are always initiated by the family of the prospective groom and is followed by an engagement ceremony — *sagai*. On the day of marriage day, *chaklapujan* and *haldi pithi* are done. *Ganapathi sthapana* (the installation of lord Ganapati) in the *mandap* (marriage booth), also formed as part of the rituals. The bridegroom is accompanied by the *barat* (marriage party). *Hastmilap* and *Mangal phera* are performed inside the *mandap*. Consummation of the marriage takes place on that day itself. After the marriage is over the bride accompanies her husband to his house for ten days after which she returns to her parents home and then goes back to her husband on an auspicious day before Holi or Diwali. On this occasion her parents present her a set of new clothes, ornaments and utensils and this is called *Paili Ana*.

With regards to funeral rituals, the corpse is bathed and wrapped in new white clothes irrespective of sex and marital status. The body is carried in a sitting posture in a *palki* (a domed) box in a cross legged position. The dead are buried in a sitting posture. Mourning period lasts upto *Barmi* (twelfth day) and on the day relatives and kin are given for the 'bhandara' (feast) in memory of the deceased. After this, they keep a small stone in memory of the deceased. After this, they erect a small temple like memorial on the grave where they lit an oil lamp. In every month of *bhadra*, *shrada* is performed.

The Bairagi-Bawa practice various kinds of services and also carry on petty business. In some villages they are the caretakers of the village temples. Their subsistence is mainly based on soliciting alms in the name of the temple though in recent times they have switched over to other types of economic pursuits. Child labour is resorted to.

As such, there is no caste council. They have a Bairagi-Bawa Samaj where every year representatives from each village meet at one place to discuss the problems of the community and take measures for its welfare. For this purpose the representative of each village collect money which is used to finance marriages of

poor girls of the community and in performing death rituals. They have also constructed a boarding house for their children.

Their main deity is Lord *Shankar* or *Shiva*, but they also worship other *Hindu gods* and *goddesses*. The *kuldevi* or the family deity is worshipped on all important occasions such as during a marriage. They observe the various Hindu festivals like *navratri*, *janmashtami*, *shivratri*, *uthasini*, *holi* *diwali*. They visit various pilgrimage centres whenever they get an opportunity.

Although not known for any specific artisanal achievement, their women engage themselves in the making of torans and bridal articles which they use in their homes for decoration and for presenting in the marriage of their daughters.

Only *Atit Bawa* and *Margi* are the member of *ther-tasiri* cluster. They enjoy the respect of other communities with whom they interdine. The only exception to this being the *Brahmans*. The communal relations are maintained only within the group.

Literacy rates among the *Bairagi-Bawas* is very low though now children are being sent to *angan-wadis*. They do avail the facilities of modern medical facilities and the women are more exposed to the propaganda of family planning and welfare than their males. They usually avail of public drinking water facilities and most of their houses are electrified. Public distribution system and Banking facilities are also availed of.

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BAJANIA

The name Bajania has been derived from their occupation of acrobatics and the beating of the drum (i.e. *baja*). They claim that they were the traditional acrobats enjoying royal patronage and were known as *Raj Nat*. They trace their origin to a place named Bajania Patni in Banaskantha district. They are chiefly distributed in the districts of Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Mehsana, Panch Mahal and Ahmedabad. In Census they have been shown under Nat. Nat Bajania, Natada, Bajigar. With the kin group and with neighbouring communities they speak in Gujarati and use Gujarati script.

The Bajania are non-vegetarian in their food habits and eat egg, fish, mutton and the meat of buffalo. *Bajra*, maize, *jawar* (millets), rice are their staple food with various kinds of *dal* (Pulses) and vegetables. The menfolk are fond of alcoholic drinks (country made) which they purchase from market. They take tea but cannot afford to take milk.

The group has two subdivisions, Chunwardia or Swadeshi, i.e. local group having local origin and Bunthia or Pardeshi who have come from outside. They are also known as Pahari. The later is considered inferior to the former. Sub-group endogamy is the rule though marriage between the members of the subgroup is tolerated. Each of these subgroups are again divided into exogamous clans and sub-clans. Some of the clans and sub-clans are Lumbhawala or Waghela, Parmaria. (Nana Parmar, Mota Parmar Nayak), Gordia, Chammiwarda, Satmiwarda, Bakla (Mota Bakla, Nana Bakla), Nat, Limbani or Limbawat, Dasiawarda Watliwarda, Nagora, Dehawari or Dehawari (Ganeshiyawala, Dariawala). The clan names sometimes denote their occupation e.g., dasaiwarda, after the name of the king who patronized wagela, nayak etc. Some names indicate their ancestral villages e.g. satmiwarda, chammiwarda, dariawala etc. They place themselves in the sudra varna above the Chamar, Bhangi, Nadia, Wadi, Od etc. but below the Targade, Luhar, Suthar etc. Others also concede this.

Community endogamy and clan exogamy are the norms that governs the marital alliances. Monogamy is the rule but polygyny is permissible. Marriage age for their sons and daughters is twenty and eighteen years respectively. Betrothal is performed at an early age. Marriages are settled through negotiation. Sometimes marriages take place through mutual consent leading to elopement. *Sindur* (vermilion) in the hair parting and bangles are the symbols of married women. Dowry is paid in cash and kind. A token of bride price is also paid. Post-marital residence is patrilocal. Divorce and remarriage (i.e. *nathra*) are permitted with the approval of the community *panch*. *Nathra* (remarriage) is a brief ritual. Widow and widower can marry again.

The Bajania are a patriarchal community. Relationships of avoidance exists between father-in-law and daughter-in-law and also between the mother-in-law and the son-in-law. The joking relationships exist between a man and his wife's younger sisters as well as between a woman and her husband's younger brothers. The parental property is inherited by the sons and shared equally. The eldest son succeeds the father.

The status of Bajania women is inferior in comparison to men. Women are not the decision makers in any family matter though they contribute to the family income by working as labourers on daily wages. They take part in social and religious rituals, but can not participate in the affairs of the community's *panch*. Daughters do not have any right over the parental property.

After the birth of a male child, the mother makes offerings to *kuldevi* (family deity). Only after this ritual, she feeds the baby. Naming ceremony takes place on the sixth day after birth. The name is given by the father's sister. The child is given a purificatory bath and the mother also takes bath. Birth pollution is observed for six days but in case of mother, it is forty days. The mother takes final purificatory bath on fortieth day and may start cooking. On the first Holi after the birth of a male child, the mother and child circumambulate the 'Holi' fire four times. Mundan (tonsure) ceremony for the male child is performed between one and three years.

Child marriages are decreasing giving way to adult marriages, though the betrothal is arranged in early childhood. *Sagai* or (betrothal) takes place at the residence of the bride and present

her a new set of dress and a token bride price of rupees seven and a half is given to her parents. Fixing of the date for the marriage ceremony is done by Gaur Brahmins. The principle rituals include of *Pithi* (smearing turmeric paste on bride and groom) the installation of lord Ganesh, and the *Barghorda* (the marriage procession). *Chauri*, *hasthmilap*, the *Phera* (circumambulation) of the sacrificial fire and *kanyadan* are the rituals observed in the house of the bride. A community feast is also arranged. The bride's parents give gifts such as ornaments, utensils, etc. to the couple. Next day the groom takes his wife to his village and consummation of marriage takes place there.

The Bajania cremate their dead. The corpse is given a bath and carried to the cremation ground meant for them. The period of pollution last for twelve days, and on the third day after cremation, the ashes are disposed in a river water. On the seventh day the male members younger to the deceased undergo *mundan* (tonsure). *Pinda* (obsequial oblation) takes place also on twelfth day followed by a community feast on thirteenth day, in which only vegetarian food is served. Countrymade liquor is an indispensable part on this day. Ashes of the dead are now taken to Haridwar for disposal.

The Bajantias are a poor, landless people. Their traditional calling is far from earning a livelihood. Very few are to be found practising the traditional vocation. They are largely self-employed in petty business such as the selling of bangles, betel leaves and beedi. Both males and females work as daily labourers. They work in various projects of the government. Children are also required to go for earning.

The traditional *panch* (council) consists of the community elders. The *panch* settles the disputes regarding marriage, divorce, quarrel etc. Regarding any other criminal activity like murder, theft etc. the community depends on law enforcing agencies. The statutory gram panchayat looks after the implementation of governmental schemes as well as arbitrate inter-community disputes.

The Bajania profess Hinduism and worship the gods and goddesses of wider Hindu pantheon. They also worship their respective *kuldevi* - Khodiarmata, Chohatdevi, Shikotarmata, Chamundamata etc. on specific life-cycle rituals. They observe festivals like, Holi, Dewali, Dassera etc. For pilgrimmage, they aspire to go to Dwarke etc.

The only art or a skilful activity distinguishing the community from others is that of their traditional vocation of acrobatics. They sing local folk songs and play drums.

They accept food and water from the higher castes as well as from some of the lower caste groups like Od and Waghri. However, clean castes do not accept food and water from them. Garo Brahmins accept *Sidha* only. They have access to common water resources.

The literacy level is very low. Their children study in local schools but largely drop out during early schooling. In any local political gathering they are treated at par with other communities. In urban areas they avail of health and medical care from hospitals but in the villages they still depend upon the indigenous medicare because of acute poverty. They have a positive attitude towards family welfare programmes. They are keen to listen to the radio. They use firewood, cow dung or coal as fuel. They are aware of irrigation, chemical fertilizers and insecticides for high agricultural yields. They avail of the benefits of various programmes of the government, like Balwadi, Anganwadi, Mid-day meal etc. Public distribution system through fair price (ration) shops is of great help to them. The banking facilities are available to them.

D. K. Nanda

BALOCH

The Baloch are believed to have come from Baluchistan, a few generations ago, and are hence named after the region. They claim to be immigrants from Halab or Aleppo and north Syria. They also connect their name to the Arabs of Al Hiaz (Gazetter of the Bombay Presidency, 1899). One of their ancestors, Fateh Khan Baluch was given the Jagir of Radhanpur and Sami during the reign of Ahmad II (AD 1554-61). Similarly Baluch Sri Fateh Khan was given *jagir* of Khadia in Purana Janagadh and in Sorath under the viceroy Alamgir for his obedience and loyalty in the year 1103 of the Islamic calendar. A few Baluchi's of Afghanistan were invited by Sri Atebhai Gohil, the then ruler of Bhavnagar to serve as his bodyguards. Budhana as *jagir* in Sehor taluka was given to them. Kareem Mohd (1939) included the Baloch under *khedothvarg* (agricultural community). They are distributed in Junagadh city and in Khadia, Keshod, Veraval and Mangrol talukas. Besides they are also distributed in Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Budhana village in Sehor taluka and in at Kundhada village in Pingadi taluka, Baspa, and Kerwada villages in Radhanpur taluka and Radhanpur city of Banaskantha district as well as in Ahmedabad district. They speak Urdu mixed with Gujarati among themselves but speak in Gujarati with others, and use Gujarati script. Still very few aged male wear *brides* (closely resemble to the pant using for horse riding) and *shervani* (long coat) and *saphabhandhi* (turban). The women wear a silk *Izar* which is a trouser like dress slightly loose up to the knee joint and a *pisway* a full sleeved garment on the upper part which flange at the bottom being tailored out of several yards of cloth. A *dupatta* (scarf) with *bharattakam* (embroidery work) or plain completes the female dress.

The Baloch are non-vegetarian with beef (she buffalo). The staple cereals are *bajra* and wheat. They also take rice and pulses such as *urad* and *chana*. Vegetables like potatoes, tomatoes, seasonal fruits like banana and chikoo and occasionally milk or

buttermilk complete their diet. Groundnut oil is the main cooking medium. Liquor consumption is rare. On festivities, sweets made out milk and wheat are eaten.

The Baloch have six *ataks* (clans) equal in status, these are being Ghabole, Lassori, Biri, Gopang, Sukhe, Oath, and Kareyi named after their ancestors. The main function of these clans is to indicate descent. They suffix the word *Baluch* to their names. The community members admit that they occupy an inferior position to the Syeds. They place themselves below Brahmans, Lohar, Ahir, Rebari and Rajput in the local social hierarchy.

Marriages are performed in accordance with Islamic tradition. The parallel and cross-cousins are preferred as partners. *Mehar* amount varies from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1000/ which is paid in cash. The age of marriage for both girls and boys which earlier used to vary between 16-19 years has gone up considerably since Independence. Marriages are arranged through negotiation and consent of parents is obtained even in the case of marriages by mutual liking. Monogamy is the prevalent form. The married women wear silver *kangan* and *nak ka dana* (nose stud). The daughter is given a few pair of clothes, ornaments and household utensils at the time of marriage as her share in the ancestral property. Patrilocal residence is the rule. Divorce is allowed on grounds of maladjustment between spouses. In such cases maintenance in the form of cash during the three and -a-half months of *iddat* (period of waiting) is paid to the divorced women by her husbands. Junior sororate is allowed. Divorcee, widow as well as widower are allowed to marry again. Widow-remarriage is discouraged. A widow never marry her husband's younger brother as the relationship between her and her younger brother-in-law is considered equivalent to that between a mother and son.

Nuclear type of families predominate over joint families. Avoidance relations are not observed and joking relationships exist between a man, his wife's younger sister and brother. Both son and daughter get a share of the ancestral property though this is not strictly in accordance with the *Shariat*. The daughter is given her share in cash or ornaments and the immovable property is shared by all the sons equally. The eldest son succeeded as the head of the family on the death of his father. Intimate relations exists within the larger kin group of the families of brothers,

sisters and cousins based on mutual help and obligation.

The Baloch women enjoy considerably low status. They are consulted on all house-hold level social and religious activities. They also contribute to the family income though supervising household duties is regarded the primary task of women.

Pre-delivery ritual begins in the seventh month of first pregnancy with the *kholbharana* ceremony when the mother fetches her pregnant daughter to the paternal home for her first delivery. Delivery takes place in hospital. The mother is treated as impure for five weeks. The child is given its name on the sixth day in the *Chatti* ceremony in which female relatives from both the sides gather, sings songs to the accompaniment of the *dhol* (drum). *Mundan* is performed between the age of five weeks and one year old at the local shrine of a *Pir*. The circumcision is done by the barber before the boy completes five years of age. A few perform the *bismillah* (initiation). *Aqiqah* is performed by very few before or at the time of the marriage.

Marriage alliances is initiated by parents of the boy. Following mutual satisfaction, the betrothal ceremony is performed. A pair of clothes, a ring and scarf are given to the bride by the boy's parents at her house. The bride is given small gifts on major festival till the marriage is solemnised. The *barat* (groom's procession) goes to the bride's house. *Nikah* is held after *Ishah Namaz* (night prayer) in the evening preceded by a feast in the afternoon. The bride goes to her husband's house where on the same night nuptial takes place. Four days after the *Nikah* she goes to her paternal residence for lunch called *choutha*. On four successive Fridays the new couple is invited by the bride's parents or closed kins for lunch known as *jumagi*. The bridegroom is given Rs. 50/- to Rs. 500/- or some gift on the completion of first year of married life.

The funeral rituals of the Baloch require that the dead be buried within six hours of death. Food is not cooked at the house of the deceased for three days, the inmates are fed by visiting relatives/ neighbours. All the relatives are fed after the men visit the grave yard to pay homage. *Dasma*, *beesma* on tenth and twentieth day respectively are performed in which children are fed. On *Chaleesma* (fortieth day), *Khatmulkhoran* (full recitation of *Khoran*) is performed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

The funeral feast is arranged. A few perform *Barasee* (anniversary) by offering *fateha* (praying).

The Baluch are mainly landless or marginal farmers although very few are in possession of agricultural land. They now earn their livelihood through non-agricultural pursuits such as truck drivers and pliers of autorickshaws, by running petty business etc. Very few are in service. A few male children work as menials in tea stalls. Wages are paid in cash. There has been a shift from agriculture to non-agricultural pursuits.

The Baloch Jamat at the local level, has hardly any control over the fellow members. Modern statutory councils have a role only in planning and implementing welfare and development activities.

The Baloch profess Islam and belong to sunni sect. They visit local shrines. Usually Ajmer is the major pilgrimage spot visited by a the Baloch. Very few also perform the *Haj*. Any local *Moulvi* (learned person) is employed to perform life-cycle rituals. *Ramzan*, *Bakrid* and *Moharram* are the major festivals celebrated in accordance with traditions.

They maintain socio-economic relations with all other communities within their habitats. Brahman, Bawa, Bharwad, Patel, Jain., Lohar do not accept cooked food or water from the Baloch. The Baloch also do not accept cooked food from the Harijan due to their reported habit of eating carrion (dead animals flesh). Exchange of brides have started taking place with other Muslim communities in recent year. They share the burial ground with other Muslim communities only and facilities of drinking water, school, entry to panchayat house are shared with all other communities. Their participation is confined to local level politics. They have employer – employee and landlord—tenant relationship with Patel land lords. They work in the farms of the Patels on a yearly basis receiving Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 3600/- and two meals a day and one or two pairs of clothes which is locally called *sathi rakhna*. A few work as share-cropping cultivators and the local term for this landlord- tenant relationship is *Khalwad*.

The level of literacy is low. A majority of the girls and boys do not continue their study beyond VII or VIII standard due to poverty and social reasons. As a result, very few are employed in government offices. They utilise modern medical facilities. The

attitude of the community towards family welfare is not favourable as only a few educated Baloch allow their women to be sterilised. They have drinking water facilities in the form of wells, bore-wells and piped water. Most of their houses have electricity. Their villages are connected with both metalled and unmetalled roads. Posts and telegraph facilities are available. Only a handful of them have irrigation facilities and have electric motors. They use chemical fertilizers and pesticides. A few have bank accounts in banks and depend on local shopkeeper for meeting their day-to-day requirements.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

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BAMCHA/BAVCHA/BAVECHA

The Bamcha are also called Bavcha, Bavecha or Bamta. The Bamcha claim that their ancestors were soldiers of the former princely state of Baroda. They gave up the profession when the ruler of Baroda disbanded the army leaving them with no other choice. They were degraded because some of their ancestors drank water from a leather container. Enthoven (1920) mentions that the Bamcha claimed themselves to be Vantias but they have become degraded. Presently they are distributed in the districts of Vadodara, Ahmedabad and Amreli. Bamchas speak in Bavchi dialect. They speak in Gujarati and use Gujarati script. The Bavchas have been listed under the category Scheduled Tribe. The Bavcha according to 1981 census have a population of 3714.

The Bavchas are non-vegetarian. *Jowar* and rice are the staple cereals and they take pulses like *mung*, *masur* and *tur* and vegetables. Groundnut oil and Palmolin oil are used as cooking media. Liquor is consumed mainly by the males, purchased either from the market or from the members of the community. Non-vegetarian food is not consumed in the month of *shravan* (July-August) They smoke *bidi* and chew betel leaves and areca nuts. Tea is the popular beverage.

The community has a number of *ataks* such as *Desai*, *Patel*, *Gamit*, *Valoi*, *Chaudhari* which are equal in social status. Each *atak* has a deity. Bavchas consider themselves lower in status than the Rajput - Darbar communities, pastoral communities like Ahir and Bharwad and service castes, but above the Scheduled castes like Bhangi, Vanker, Dhed etc. Other communities perceive them as one of the low ranking communities in the area.

The daughter of one's mother's brother and also that of father's sister are acceptable partners. Marriages may be negotiated between the members of the same *atak* but the bride and the groom required to be four to five generations apart. Earlier child marriages were in vogue. The boys are married around 20 and girls between 17-18 years of age. Marriage by mutual consent and

negotiation are the general mode of acquiring mates. Monogamy is the common form. Polygyny though permissible, it is rarely practised. Levirate both at junior and senior level is permitted. Payment of bride-price is practised. *Mangal Sutra* (Black bead necklace) silver bangle and vermillion on forehead are the symbols of a married woman. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce and remarriages (*natra*) of divorcee and widow are permissible. Bride price is paid in cash. In case of divorce, children are the liability of the mother. A widower also can marry again. It involves only a brief ritual.

Majority of Bavchas live in nuclear type of families. Avoidance relations exist between the daughter-in-laws and father-in-law and also between a woman and her husband's elder brother. Joking relations are allowed with the elder brother's wife and with wife's younger sister. Inheritance is on the basis of rule of male equigeniture. Succession and descent are reckoned through the eldest son. Inter-family linkages exist mostly within the members of the community.

Women do not have a right to property. They are engaged in economic activities to supplement family income. It is the woman's function to collect potable water and fire-wood. They have a role in religious and ritual ceremonies at the family level but not in the mechanism of social control nor in political activities. They have a major role in family management and decision making process within the family. They enjoy a status lower than that of their men.

Khoda-bharva (lap filling) is performed in the seventh month of the first pregnancy in the husband's house in which the parents of the expectant woman and some female relatives also participate. In this ceremony, black-gram, rice, betel leaves and areca nuts are put into the lap of the woman and three days after the ceremony she goes to her parental house for confinement. The child undergoes a ritual bath immediately after delivery. On *chhatti*, ie. sixth day after child birth both the baby and mother are bathed and a name confirmed on the child by its father's sister. The first feeding of cereal is observed when the baby becomes sixth or seventh months old. Tonsure ceremony is observed between one and five years of age. Menstrual pollution is strictly observed for a period of four days.

Marriage rituals include *Ganapathi-puja*, *pitti* (application of turmeric paste) to the bride and groom is an important ritual and marriage is solemnised as pre-scheduled. The actual marriage ritual *Mangal-phera* preceded by *hastamilap* (putting the palms of the bride and the groom one the other). Both bride and bridegroom circumambulate the sacrificial fire *chori*. Marriages takes place at night followed by a feast for the groom's party hosted by the bride's parents. Nupitals take place at the groom's residence.

Dead are cremated in the nearby cremation ground. The dead body is laid on a bamboo bier and carried to the cremation ground. The ladies are not allowed to accompany the funeral procession. Before placing the dead body on the pyre, seven circumambulations are performed. The eldest son lits the pyre. The ashes are collected in an earthen pot and is immersed in the Sabarmati river after a few days. Sons undergo tonsure ceremony on the fourth day after death and after twelve days the *barva* ceremony is observed which is associated with the *shradh* and the *pinddan* rituals. The Brahman performs these rituals and relatives participate in a feast following this. Every year in the month of *Ashad* (June-July) the dead ancestors are remembered by offering oblations. In some areas they practise burials.

The Bamcha earn their livelihood as day labourers, agricultural labourers and as domestic servants. They are a landless community. They work either on daily wage or on the basis of monthly remuneration. Adult women work as maidservants. Their children also take such occupations. Very few are found in services and there are a few small and marginal farmers depending on cultivation.

The community has a traditional caste council to settle disputes of social and economic nature involving its members. The office bearers are elected by voice vote. The major function of this council is to safeguard the traditional socio-cultural norms. The headman of the council is called *Mukhi* (headman) who is elected by members of the council. The statutory panchayat also exists alongside which implements welfare and development schemes.

The Bamcha propitiate all the Hindu gods and goddesses with special emphasis on the worship of deities like Kalka, Khoriar, Amba. In addition each *attack* has its own *kuldevi* (clan deity). They celebrate all Hindu festivals including Holi, Diwali, Navratri

etc. In recent times they have also adopted the practice of employing Brahmans to perform various rituals which was not the case earlier. A section of them belong to Kabirpanth sect.

The Bamcha have their own distinctive folk songs which are sung on the occasion of marriages and also have a rich tradition of folk tales.

The Bamcha have linkage with various communities. Occupationally they are linked to various castes. All the castes considered higher than them in the social hierarchy do not take food or water from them though Bavchas accept it from them. They do not take food and water from the communities lower to them, like Dhed, Vankar, Chamar, etc. Modern inter-community linkages allow them to interact with all communities.

Very few of them are reported to be literate and educated. They have adopted family welfare measures. They prefer modern medicare. Drinking water and electricity facilities are available. Rural employment schemes such as I.R.D.P. and other governmental loans are utilized to some extent. Mid-day meal scheme is utilized by their children who attend school and they avail of the public distribution system and banking facilities.

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BANJARA

The Banjara or Vanjara are mostly carriers and drivers of pack-bullocks. In earlier days, they used to visit different places with food grains and tobacco on bullocks and return with salt and other essential commodities. Owing to the spread of road transport and railways, their caravan business is fast dying out. They claim that they are of Rajput descent. They have large colonies in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In Gujarat, they are concentrated in the districts of Ahmedabad, Rajkot and Baroda. Most of the Banjaras of the state have come from Rajasthan. They speak Gujarati with the outsiders but within their own community they speak Marwari dialect. Gujarati script is used. Upto twelve years of age, a Banjara girl wears a skirt and a *choli* (blouse). A women wears *ghagra* (petticoat) and a *choli* (blouse) with a *dupatta* (upper garment a piece of cloth used for covering the chest) while men wear *dhoti* (waist cloth) and a *kamij* (shirt). An old person also dons a colourful *safo* (turban). Their women are very fond of ornaments. They wear *hansli* (necklace), *kadi* (leg ring) made of silver. Their women also decorate their body with tattoo marks. They can be identified by large number of bangles which they wear.

The Banjara are non-vegetarian. *Bajri* (spiked millet) and wheat constitute staple food. They take all varieties of pulses like gram, *tur*, *masur* etc. They use all kind of vegetables, roots and tubers which are locally available to them. Groundnut oil is used as cooking medium. They take tea and *chhas* (butter milk) daily. Alcoholic drinks are taken by men occasionally. Consumption of fruits is occasional. Consumption of pulses and vegetables are on the increase due to soaring prices of non-vegetarian items.

The Banjaras have *sakhs* (lineags) which regulate matrimonial alliances. Some of the *sakhs* are : Parmar, Solanki, Padiyar, Jao, Dhukkar, Rad, Rathore, Tuyor, Khemabat, Gehlot, Doll, Vati, Daleya etc. All *sakhs* enjoy equal status. The *sakh* name is used as surname. They are conscious of Varna system and they perceive

themselves as having belonging to middle order of the local social hierarchy. Other communities do perceive the same.

The Banjaras are an endogamous community. Cross-cousin marriage is allowed. Sororate (junior) and levirate (junior) marriages are also practised. In earlier days child marriage was the norm, but now-a-days, they practice adult marriage. The modes of acquiring mate in either by negotiation between parents or by mutual consent. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. *Chuda* is the symbol of marriage for women. Bride-price is prevalent and is given in cash and kind. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Approval of the *panch* (council of elders), is required for divorce. This is on the decline now. Either party can seek divorce. Children become the liability of father in divorce cases. Remarriages of widow, widower, and divorcees are allowed. Remarriage of a widow called *natra* which takes place without any elaborate marriage rituals.

Both, nuclear and extended types of families exist among them. Joking relationship exists among certain family members like between sister-in-law and brother-in-law. Similarly avoidance relationships are also maintained between daughter-in-law and father-in-law. Male equigeniture governs the rules of inheritance. The eldest son succeeds to the authority in the family after the death of his father.

The Banjara Women enjoy low status to that of men. They participate in social, ritual and religious activities along with their men. They also contribute to family income. Women do not have decision making powers. It is a woman's job to collect fuel and bring potable water. They keep themselves away from political activities, and from the mechanism of social control.

Pre-delivery ritual called *kholabharoni* (lap filling) is observed during the seventh month of pregnancy. The delivery takes place in one inner corner of the house. *Suyani* (local mid-wife) or an expert woman conducts the delivery. Observation of pollution on delivery is for forty days. *Chhatti* ceremony is performed on the sixth day, and the child is named in consultation with a Brahman priest. *Mundan* (tonsure) ceremony is observed only in case of male children.

Marriage take place in two phases, *mangni* (betrothal) and *gaona*. Betrothal takes place at an early age and *gaona* (actual marriage)

takes place at the age of fifteen to seventeen years of age. Three days before marriage, *pithi* (application of turmeric paste on the bodies of the bride and groom) ceremony is performed. Marriage ceremony is solemnized by a Brahman priest at the bride's residence. On the day of marriage, *mandavo* (marriage booth) is erected. The marriage party from the boy's side is entertained with a grand feast. Nuptial ceremony is carried out at the groom's residence.

In case of death of a child, pregnant woman, persons dying of snake bite and smallpox they bury the body. In case of the death of an adult male or female they cremate the dead body. The close relatives and neighbours carry the body to the cremation ground. At the cremation ground the dead body is given a bath and covered with new clothes. No food is prepared in the house of the deceased for three days. The neighbours or the close relatives send cooked food to the deceased's family. They observe pollution for a period of twelve days. *Sradh* ceremony takes place on the eleventh day. A funeral feast is given to the neighbours and the relatives on this day. In recent times the life-cycle rituals are being minimized because the rituals performance is becoming expensive day by day.

The traditional occupation of the Banjaras was trading on a small scale. At present most of them are engaged as casual labourers in construction work or as daily wage labourers. The mode of economic transaction is always cash. Their children also work as daily wage labourers. They are a landless community. They entirely depend on market for their day to day requirements. Number of daily wage casual labourers are on the increase.

The Banjara have their own regional caste association. The head of the association is known as *Pramukh*. The association mainly looks after the socio-economic matters. Adultery, rape, elopement and theft are considered as social crimes. The municipal board and the statutory panchayat plan and implement welfare and developmental activities within their jurisdictions.

The Banjara profess Hinduism. They worship Rama, Krishna, Kalka mata etc. of wider pantheon. They also worship the cow. They observe Holi, Deepawali and Rakshabandhan with great enthusiasm. They believe in ghosts and spirits. The sacred specialists of the society is called *Bhagat*, who look after the

sacred temple of the Banjaras. Life-cycle rituals and ceremonies are solemnised with the help of a Brahman priest. They pay visits to local pilgrimages like Ambaji, Shamlaji, Dwaraka and Somnath from time to time.

Some of them are good *bhajan* (devotional songs) singers. There are several folk tales in the Banjara community. Their women sing folk songs at the time of marriage and on other ceremonial occasions.

The Banjaras accept both cooked and uncooked food from all except scheduled castes. They do not exchange food with other communities. They share facilities of well and water sources with other communities and also share the cremation ground. They visit the same religious shrines which the others visit. They receive the services of barber, washerman and cobblers in the locality. Contractor-labourer relationship exists among the Banjaras. The people mainly depend on labour work. Hardly anybody is engaged in white-collar job. The community lacks political leadership either at the regional or at the national level.

Formal education has yet to become popular among them. Boys read upto primary level, while girls are not sent to schools. The reason for drop-outs among children is due to poverty. Their attitude towards indigenous - traditional medicare as well as modern medicare is favorable. Their attitude is favourable towards family planning. However, Couples continue to prefer three to four children. They use both indigenous and modern methods of family planning. Drinking water is available within the locality. Only a few of them have been benefitted through the Integrated Rural Development programme. They listen to radio and visit cinema halls. Facilities of road, railway and post office exist nearby. Cow-dung cakes and kerosene oil are the main fuel resources. Mid-day meal scheme for children are availed of. Facility of fair price shop is available. Their attitude towards savings is favourable.

Jyotirmoy Chakraborty

BANJARA (MUSLIM)

The Banjara call themselves Chhakda, Banjara Muslim and Chhakoda Banjara, while people of other communities refer to them as Chhakda only. The name Chhakda has been derived from the *Chhakda gadi* (hackney carriage). Long ago, their forefathers used to travel, in the six wheeler carriage which was also their mobile shop and they moved from one place to another in this carriage, and were leading a nomadic life. Later on (five generations ago) these people got settled. Due to communal riots in 1948, large number of them migrated from Jaisalmer to Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and to Pakistan. They are distributed in Panchmahal, Kheda, Ahmedabad, Sabarkantha districts. They speak Marwari dialect among themselves and with others in Gujarati. They use Gujarati script. A good number of them are also conversant in Hindi. The Banjara Men wear *lungi* (long cloth) *kamij* (shirt) and *safa* (turban) while women folk wear *salwar* (loose trousers) *kamij* (long shirt) and *odhni*.

The Banjaras are non-vegetarian. They consume meat of goat, sheep chicken, fish, egg etc. but abstain from beef. Staple food of the community is wheat with *dal* (pulse) or *subji* (vegetables) and occasionally a non-vegetarian dish. Occasionally, they also eat rice. They prefer *tur* (pigeon pea), *chana* (gram) *moong* (green grain). Their cooking medium is Palmolein oil. They eat various kinds of roots, tubers etc. which are locally available. Fruit consumption is rare. Milk is given to children only. Drinking of alcohol is prevalent among men. They smoke *bidi* and also chew tobacco. On festival occasions, they prepare *shirni*, *laddu*, *lapsi* etc.

The Banjara is strictly an endogamous community. Every Banjara suffixes the community name as surname. Their self-perception regarding their social position among the communities of this region is low. Even among the Muslim communities they have a lower social status in comparison to Saiyyad, Pinjara, Kadia, Ghanchi, Mansoori etc.

The Banjara maintain community level endogamy. They practice

both inter-and intra-village level marriages. Parallel-cousin marriage is the preferential type of marriage in their society. Cross-cousin marriage is permissible but is not practised. Junior levirate and both type of sororate (i.e. senior and junior) are practised. In the past, they were practicing child marriages, but now, the girls are married between 16-20 years of age, while boys are married between 18-25 years of age. The marital alliance is settled through elder persons or parents from both the sides. They follow monogamous type of marriage, though polygamy is permitted in case if there is no male issue, or if the wife is barren or insane. Symbol of a married woman is gold nose stud. The bridegroom's side gives a few ornaments and utensils to the bride. They follow the patrilocal residence after the marriage. Divorce is permitted with the consent of *jamat*. Both husband and wife have the right to divorce, on grounds of adultery, maladjustment etc. The *jamat* fixes the amount of compensation to be given to the aggrieved party. After the divorce, children are liability of the mother. Widow, widower and divorcee remarriages are permissible.

A majority of the families of Banjara community are of nuclear type. A few vertical extended families are also found. After marriage, every son moves to a new hut and they form a separate nuclear family. Avoidance relationship exists between father-in-law and daughter-in-law. All the sons have equal right in their parental property. Some give five percent share of the total property to their sisters, who are entitled to have this share in the property. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family after his father's death.

The women of Banjara community enjoy low status in comparison to men in all spheres of life. They do not have the same kind of right over the ancestral property as men have. Women participate in all social, religious activities. A good number of women are engaged as daily wage labourers, milk-sellers, maid servants etc. and there by contribute to their family's income. Besides, women also do household works like cooking, child-rearing, collection of fuel wood, fetching water etc. The family expenditure is managed by men.

The Banjara community observes a pre-delivery ritual known as *khola barna*. The pregnant woman is taken to her father's house for the first delivery in the seventh month of pregnancy.

Deliveries conducted at home with the help of an experienced *dai* (mid-wife). Some families get the delivery conducted in government hospitals when any complication arises. They observe birth pollution for forty five days. On the forty sixth day of birth, *mundan* (tonsure) is performed for male children by local *Khalifa* (barber). *Khalifa* (Muslim barber) conducted the *khatna* (circumcision) of two to seven years old male child followed by a feast to their relatives and friends.

On the *sagai* (engagement) day, women, children and friends of the bride groom's side go to bride's house and offer some cash and sweets to her. The parents of bride and groom settle a date for marriage as well as the ornaments, and clothes to be given etc. Duration of marriage celebrations is either three days or five days. During these three or five days both the bride and groom are anointed with paste of turmeric powder mixed with oil by their women relatives. Songs are sung by the ladies. On the third day or the fifth day, after giving a ritual bath to the bride and the groom, *Nikah* is solemnized by a *Moulavi* or *Qazi*. The fixed *meher* amount is paid by the groom to the bride. Marriage feast are given both by the bride's and groom's sides. The bride is taken to the bride groom's house where she stays for a couple of days. Consummation of marriage takes place there. Later, she comes back to her parent's home where she stays for three to ten days, after which she returns to her husband's house for living there permanently.

The dead body is buried in the nearest graveyard. After three days of mourning period, some relatives go to the burial ground where they offer ritual prayer to the dead person and put flowers on grave. During these three days, no food is cooked in the house of the deceased. Relatives or friends send cooked lunch and dinner. The widow cannot leave the house for four months and ten days. The widow breaks her bangles and does not wear any kind of ornaments.

In the past Banjaras were a nomadic group. A small fraction of them had settled down in villages and are cultivating some crops and vegetables. Now-a-days, a majority of the Banjaras depend on agricultural labour which is the main source of livelihood for them. Besides, some work as casual wage labourer in road construction, house construction etc. Some do selling of cow or buffalo milk.

Their women also work as domestic servants. The mode of transaction is cash. They are extremely poor. None of them is engaged in a government job, however, a fractional number of them work in private bodies.

The Banjara community has a traditional panchayat which has a *Patel* (chief) and ordinary members. Adultery, rape, disputes over land and water, disregard to traditional norms of the society, theft etc. are kind of offences dealt with by this body. Cases of divorce occur in small number. Divorce cases are settled by this panchayat. A guilty person is penalized with cash fine or excommunicated. A Nagar Panchayat exists which is a heterogeneous institution work for the welfare of all the people in its jurisdiction.

The Banjara belongs to the Sunni sect of Islam. They celebrate the festivals of *Muharram*, *Bakrid*, *Ramjan Id* etc. The *Muharram* festival is observed for ten days in the first month of Islamic year.

Marriage songs are sung by women of Banjara community. Devotional songs (*kawalli*) are sung by men.

The Banjara community has traditional linkages with other Muslim and Hindu communities. They approach the socially and economically higher groups like Saiyed, Kadia, Bania etc. for getting jobs. They accept both cooked, uncooked food, and water from any Muslim community. But Hindu communities do not accept even water from the Banjara. They always join and participate in all ceremonial occasions. The Banjara people get supply of water from taps and wells. They share road, school with all communities and graveyard with other Muslim communities.

The literacy among the Banjara is very low. Very few children are sent to primary school and *madrasa*. Girls are not sent to school. Their attitude towards modern and traditional medicare is favourable. Their attitude towards family planning is not favourable. They do not get any loan from Integrated Rural Development Programme. Radio is the only medium of communication found in their community. The fuel resources are firewood and cow dung cakes. Nutrition programme through primary school are enjoyed by their children.

Jyotirmay Chakraborty

[Note: For Bansphodia, see Wansphodia.]

BAORI

The Baori believe that their ancestors originally inhabited the forest regions of Uttar Pradesh from where they migrated to other parts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Punjab during the regime of Aurangzeb, the Mughal ruler, to escape conversion to Islam. They are distributed in the districts of Jamnagar, Panchmahals (Godhra), Mehsana (Kalol), Banaskantha (Palanpur), Ahmedabad, Rajkot and other parts of Saurashtra. They are mainly nomadic. They sell country liquor. Within the group, they communicate in the Baori dialect which is mixture of Hindi and Gujarati and in Gujarati with outsiders.

The Baori are non vegetarian. They consume vagitables roots and tubers in addition to the game they occasionally hunt. However, with more settled habits lately their diet is based on common cereals like wheat and rice. They use palmolein oil as a cooking medium. They take alcoholic drinks as well as non-alcoholic beverages. They rarely eat fruits.

The community is divided into various *ataks* (clans) like Thakur, Badiara, Dhandal, Solanki, Parmer, Davi, Chowhan etc. which regulate marriage alliances. The Baoris consider the Kolis, Waghris, Harijans and Dhobis as inferior to them in social status. Although the Baoris claim to have belonged to Kashatriya order of the four fold varna system, their social and economic status varies at the regional level due to their supposedly criminal background.

Atak exogamy is the most important rule of marriage. In matrimonial alliances, care is taken to ensure that there is no blood relationship for atleast seven generations. The average age at marriage ranges 18 to 20 years in case of females and 20 to 24 years in case of males. Marriages are negotiated by the parents though marriages by mutual consent and elopment are also reported. Monogamy is the common form of marriage and there are no specific marriage symbols. Bride price is given. Patrilocal residence is the post-marital practice. Divorce is permitted and it is settled by the caste council. Either party initiate the procedure.

The complementary payments are made in such cases and the children are the liability of the mother. Remarriages of widow (*natra*) widower and divorcee are permissible.

Nuclear families are predominant. Avoidance relationship maintained by a married women by keeping veil before her husband's elder males. Joking relationship persists however between a man and his wife's younger sister. As a rule the female gets a lesser share than the males from parent's property. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family after the death of father.

The Baori women are concerned mainly with the collection of fire-wood and potable water. They have a significant role in religious activities but they do not play a political role or in the mechanism of social control. Women contribute to the family income but the overall household expenditure is controlled by the males. On the whole women enjoy lower status.

The actual marriage ceremony is followed by *sagai* (betrothal). Marriages are performed in the evenings officiated by a Brahman priest. The ceremony begins with the arrival of the groom in a procession at the residence of the bride and it includes circumambulation of the fire (*phara*) by the bride and the groom for seven times. It concludes with a grand feast. The newly-wed couple leave the next morning for the residence of the groom where the nuptial ceremony takes place.

Childbirth in case of first pregnancy takes place at the expectant mother's natal home assisted by a midwife. She is paid for her service with jaggery, vegetables and some cash. She is restricted to do household work for twenty to thirty days. The Brahman suggests names to the new born baby. The *mundan* (tonsure) is performed by the barber (*hajam*) before the child attains the age of one.

The dead are cremated with the eldest son lit the pyre first on the toe of the deceased. Ashes are kept in an earthen pot to be immersed in the river. After twelve days the *barma* is performed in which *pinddan* is an essential ritual (the offering of balls of rice to the departed souls.) The Brahman performs these rituals. The sons of the dead have their head shaved. The anniversary *barashi* is performed after a year for the peace of the departed soul.

Their traditional means of livelihood like thievery and the selling of country liquor are not sufficient to earn a square meal. They are now also engaged in daily labour on construction sites and in

shopping plazas and hotel establishments. Children are also involved in such occupations. Baoris are also small scale vendors of groundnuts and fried gram etc.

The community has a traditional caste council. Aged and experienced persons are selected as members. This council settles disputes regarding inter-family conflicts, divorce cases etc. The Baoris also come under the purview of the Statutory Panchayats and other bodies which exist for the overall planning and implementation of the various welfare and development programmes of the Government.

The Baori are Hindus. They worship *Besramata*, *Kalikamata*, *Mohamai*, *Basanti* etc. who are their Kuldevis (clan deities). They have great devotion towards *Dheradev*. They observe fast on Fridays to propitiate goddess Santoshi-Mata. The Brahmans perform the rituals. They participate with great enthusiasm in the fairs and festivals of Sitalastami, Holi, Diwali etc. They have their own folktales and folk songs.

Traditionally the Baori do not accept nor exchange food and water from Kolis, Waghri, Dhobi and Harijans. They interdine with Ahir, Rabari, Bania, Suthar, Lohar etc. The Brahmans do not accept water and food from the Baoris, but they accept water and food from Brahman. Rituals based friendship like *dharam bhai*, *dharam bahin* are reported amongst them. Increasing interaction with other communities in recent times has however made the Baoris less rigid in the practice of many traditional customs pertaining to interdining.

Their attitude towards the various development programmes is not positive because of their ignorance and low levels of education. Due to their poor economic condition, both boys and girls hardly study beyond the primary level. Hence only a few children benefit from the mid-day meals provided in schools. They are favourably inspired towards modern medical care though they also utilise the indigenous system of medicine. They have a positive attitude towards family welfare and birth control programmes. They have been benefitted from the public distribution system and other public services such as drinking water facilities. They use kerosene oil and dried cow - dung cake as fuel.

Biplab Das

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BARDA

The Barda means hilly region. So people from hilly region are called Barda. They are believed to have migrated to Gujarat from the Khandesh region and are hence also known as the Khandeshi Bhil. At the regional level they are regarded as a subdivision of the Bhil. Enthoven (1920) mentioned them as belonging to one of the twelve forest and hill tribes of Gujarat. The Bhil consider them as one of their group but treat them as inferior in social status because of their habit of consuming beef. They are mainly distributed in Mehsana, Ahmedabad, Baroda and Surat districts. They speak the local dialect of Gujarati and use the Devnagri script. A few communicate with outsiders in Hindi. Earlier men used to wear a loin cloth but now they wear turban, shirt and dhoti. Their women wear enormous *hared ghagra* (skirt) with or without inner garment. Both men and women wear brass or silver ear-rings and anklets. They are a scheduled tribe. They have well-built muscular bodies.

The Barda are non-vegetarians and take fish, egg, mutton and beef. Their staple food is *bajra*, *jowar* and wheat. They consume pulses like *tur*, *urad*, *moong*, *moth* etc. Groundnut and linseed oil are used in cooking and they consume a variety of leafy and green vegetables. Men and women take home-made alcoholic drinks. Milk is taken and they smoke *bidi*, cigarette, and chew tobacco and betel leaves. However, largely they subsist on a gruel made of *bajra*.

The Barda have totemistic clans, such as Ahir, Baria, Dangia, Gaikwad, Mali, Mori, Thakur and so on which are the basis of marriage alliances. They use clan names as their surnames.

Marriages take place at the consanguineous level i.e., a man marry the daughter of his maternal uncle which now has expanded to include the daughter of one's father's sister as well. Marriageable age for boys ranges between 16-18 and for girl it varies between 12-14. Mates are acquired through negotiation, by elopment and by ceremonial capture known as *bhaguria* which take place during Holi Mongamy is the common form of marriage but sorroral

polygyny is permitted though it is rarely reported. Symbols of marriage for woman are finger ring, toe ring and ear-ring. The system of bride-price is prevalent; the amount ranging from Rs. 25/- to Rs. 500/-. Post-marital residence is patrilocal. Divorce is permissible and the compensatory payment is made to the father of the woman though it is always initiated by the husband and the case is decided by the village panchayat. Junior levirate and junior sororate type of marriages are practised in cases of death of a spouse. A divorcee both male and female, a widower or widow can remarry. It is noticed that the incidence of divorce and expenditure on marriages have increased.

Families are nuclear and kin-based resting on mutual respect and love between spouses and their children. Avoidance relationships however exist between daughter-in-law and father-in-law and elder brother-in-law (husband's elder brother). Joking relationships exist between sister-in-law and husband's younger brother. Sons inherit the parental property and get an equal share. A person having no son adopts his brother's son or a similar kin who becomes the legal heir after his death.

The Barda women do not inherit property. They work as daily wage labourers in the field and bring potable water. Women play a role in social functions and they claim to have equal status.

Life cycle rituals are performed at birth, marriage and death. During pregnancy, a pre-delivery ritual called *Kholbharana* is observed in the seventh month of first pregnancy, when the woman is taken to her natal home. The expectant mother is subject to certain restrictions and child birth takes place with the assistance of the local *bana* (mid-wife) for which she is remunerated either in cash or in kind. The child is named on an auspicious date after consultation with a Brahman priest, the name itself given by the child's father's sister. Pollution begins with child birth. The *Surajpujan* (worship of Sun) is performed on the sixth day in which the house is cleaned and the mother and the new born are brought out into the open into the Sunlight for the first time after birth. A feast is also arranged on that day which is attended by close-kin. This marks the end of pollution for all except the mother who takes her final purificatory bath after a month and a quarter. She can then enter the kitchen and carry on with all household activities.

Marriages are settled generally through negotiation, with a kin acting as a mediator and initiator. Once it is final, the *sagai* or (betrothal) is performed; the *lagan* (marriage) itself taking place within fifteen to forty-five days after the engagement. Marriage rites are performed at bride groom's residence. *Phera* (circumambulation) of the sacred fire is the main ritual. The couple also takes an oath for conjugal life. The marriage feast takes place that day and the next morning the couple leaves for the boy's house, where on arrival they are welcomed by the boy's mother. *Suhagrat* (the ceremonial beginning of conjugal life) takes place at the groom's house.

The dead are cremated though in the case of children, burial is the method of disposal. The eldest son is the chief mourner in the death ceremonies. Death pollution is observed for eleven days while purification taking place with the performance of the *shradh* ceremony officiated by a Brahmin priest.

Most of the Bardies have given up their hunting-gathering way of life for a settled life style earning their livelihood as daily wage labourers in the agricultural sector and also as urban industrial workers. A few who have small pieces of land produce millets and pulses and engage in exchange relations through the weekly market. The number of casual labourers from amongst the community is increasing day-by-day.

The Barda have traditional village councils which is headed by a *Mukhiya* or *Pradhan* who is selected by a voice vote. In some cases it is a hereditary position based on the principle of male primogeniture. These councils under the auspices of their headman settle some problems of a social nature, minor land disputes and quarrels. For major litigation, both involving land and criminal offences recourse is taken to the courts of law. Punishment is imposed by the councils in the form of cash fines with an amount varying according to the severity of the offence. For minor offence the offender is pardoned, if he apologizes to the council. Excommunication as a form of punishment is rarely reported. Statutory Panchayat system also co-exists for the development and welfare.

The Barda have their own tribal belief-systems to which has been added the worship of gods of wider religious pantheon like Mahadev, Ram, Laxman, Hanuman etc. They observe many

festivals such as Shivratri, Holi, Diwali, Sheetala Saptami, Dussehra, Ramnavmi, Navaratri etc. Although they have tribal religious priests they also utilize the services of Brahmans of lower ritual status. They visit pilgrim spots like Bechraji, of Maharaja Ambaji of Mt. Abu, Petan.

Their community existence and their artistic instincts find expression in their songs and dances performed especially on the occasion of Navratri. There is also a wealth of folk tales, riddles, and proverbs, very much a live tradition transmitted from generation to generation.

They Barda have economic and social relationship with Banias, Brahman and they accept water and all types of food from all the neighbouring communities. They have access to public places, buildings, institutions and temples. At present in the urban areas they have developed inter-community linkages. They take interest in local politics and they also participate in the politics of the region.

Literacy levels are very low, partly because their attitude towards formal education of both boys and girls is favourable. They are unaware of the services extended by the various governmental welfare agencies. Depending upon indigenous herbal medicines, but lately they start availing of modern medicare to some extent. They favour family welfare programmes. Drinking water facilities are available to them. They use fire wood and kerosene for the cooking purposes. They listen to the radio and are marginally covered by the modern mass media. They are familiar with use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. They avail of facilities provided by fair price shops but their attitude towards savings is not favourable. They mainly depend upon money-lenders.

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BARIA

The derivation of the term 'Baria' is connected to the present town of Devgad Baria which till 1782 was known as Baria. The word 'Devgadh' meaning God's fort was given to it by its builder a Rajput ruler, Prithviraj. The Baria hence call themselves also Baria Patel claim Rajput ancestry. The Koli of Gujarat are of two categories - the Patanwadiyas or Pardesis (foreigners) and the Talpadas (indigenous). Among Talpadas, there are sections like Bariya, Khant, Patelia, Kotwal and Pagi. "The Barias are considered to have the highest status, so much so that the Talapadas have adopted Baria as a Caste appellation." (Shah and Shroff, 1975). The Baria has emerged as a separate group obliterating its original identity, but claiming Rajput descent. Now, they do not like to be called by their old name and have adopted Rajput clan names to show their high position in the local social hierarchy. They are mainly distributed in Panchmahal district. The Baria women can be identified by her typical *vandi* (necklace). They speak Gujarati and use the Gujarati script.

The Baria are non-vegetarian. Maize is the staple cereal for them. They also take rice. Pulses of *tur*, *urad*, and grain make essential part of their diet. The millet is taken in the winter season. The Baria take vegetables and fruits as per their availability. Groundnut oil is used for cooking. They also consume milk occasionally. They are fond of alcoholic drinks and *neera* (juice from date palm tree). They brew liquor from *mahua* (*Bassia Latifolia*), flower and also from molasses. The Baria smoke *biri* and cigarettes. They smoke *hukka* (hubble-bubble) and chew betel leaves occasionally.

The community has a number of clans such as Baria, Patel, Pagi, Damor, Khant, Parmar, Pandor, Rangda, Chauhan, Maliwad, etc. Some of the clans have names of communities like Damor and Khant, while others label themselves after Rajput clans like Parmar and Chauhan. These clans have their individual deities which are worshipped during life cycle rituals. The Baria are aware of the

Varna system and place themselves in the Kshatriya order. The Baria place themselves below the Rajputs but higher than the Harijans in the local social hierarchy. Others also place them in middle order.

The Baria are monogamous. Girls marry between the ages of 14 to 16 years and the boys, between 15 to 20 years. Marriages are materialized through negotiations, but marriage by mutual consent and by elopement are also frequent. Married women wear *kada* (golden armlet) and apply *tikki* on their foreheads. These symbols are not strictly observed. The clans are strictly not exogamous. They avoid marrying close kin upto four or six generations on both the patenal and maternal sides. Village-exogamy is observed. Bride-price (*bhanjad/dapa*) is paid in marriage. Rule of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce and remarriage are permitted in the community. Widow remarriage (*natra*) is permissible which involves a brief ritual. A widower can also marry again. Junior levirate (*dear vatu*) and junior sororate are also in practice. In case of divorce, the woman has to return all the ornaments presented by her husband. If she remarries, the bride-price is also returned to her first husband and the children become the liability of the father. Both husband and wife can initiate divorce.

Both extended and nuclear families exist. Avoidance relations are observed between a woman and her husband's elder brother and father. The daughter-in-law keeps veil in the presence of these members. Joking relationships exist between a woman and her husband's younger brother and also between a man and the younger sister of his wife. Rules of inheritance are based on principle of male equigeniture, but the house goes to youngest son. The eldest son succeeds his father.

Women do not inherit any parental property. They work as agricultural labourers, and day labourers and, thus contributing to the family income. They collect fuel and fodder and participate in social, ritual and religious activities. The woman's role in the management of family affairs is very important. They enjoy low status than that of their men.

Simant is celebrated in the seventh month of the first pregnancy in which her brother brings a set of clothes for her alongwith a coconut and sweets. After *Simant*, she is sent to her parent's

house and the first delivery takes place there. The Baria take the help of local midwives from their own community. '*Chhati*' ceremony is held on the sixth day after birth. The house is cleaned and smeared with cowdung mixed in water. *Kuwa* poojan (well worship) is also performed on this day. Naming ceremony takes place. Birth pollution is observed for forty days by the mother. In the *anna prasan*, ceremony solid food is given to the child first time when the child becomes six months old. The *mundan* (tonsure) ceremony is performed for the sons within a year.

Once the negotiation is finalized the *chandla* (engagement) takes place. The amount of bride-price and ornaments, to be given to the bride in marriage are also fixed. A Brahman priest officiates in marriage. *Garpati puja* is performed which initiates the rituals in marriage. *Peethi* (anointing of oil and turmeric paste) starts after this. The girl's party brings turbans (red and white) and four to six other sets of dress and gives them to the boy's father. A feast is arranged. *Thambi puja* is done. Four circumambulations of the sacred fire are made by the bride and the groom. A Brahman priest officiates in the marriage. The groom returns with the bride to his house. Consummation of marriage takes place at groom's house. In case of elopment, the payment of bride price settles the issue and recognize the union.

In case of death of a minor the dead are buried and mourning is observed for five days. Tonsure is also done on this occasion in the family. Otherwise they practise cremation. On the third day, the bones are collected and kept in an earthen pot, and washed with urine of cow and milk and then immersed into the river after forty days. Pollution is observed for twelve days. On the tenth day, the house and clothes are cleaned and on the twelfth day the *barwa* ceremony is performed with a feast for the kin. On the fourteenth day bangles are worn by the widow and she now becomes eligible to marry again.

The traditional occupation of the Baria community is agriculture. Both men and women work in the fields with children assisting them, if they are not attending schools. The Baria are also engaged as daily labour on construction sites. They are in the services too.

The Baria have a organization or panchayat, known as the *samaj panch* at the community level. Five *mukhis* are elected by a voice vote. They settle the disputes. The statutory *gram panchayat*

looks after the development programmes in the village. The *samaj panch* also takes the help of the *Sarpanch* in dealing with cases of adultery, assault, divorce and breaking of betrothals and marriages in the community.

The Baria are Hindus. They worship Sikodar Mata, Chudwel Mata, Khodiyar Mata as their clan deities, while Kheda deo and Kuwar Bai are the village deities who are propitiated collectively by the villagers. Kherol Mata is another deity whose temple is at Garh Chunari. Besides they worship Ram, Krishna, Hanuman and Ramdeoaji of the wider Hindu pantheon. They visit Pawagarh (Kalika Mata) Dakor (Ranchhorji), Tuwa (Prabhuji) Bhagwan and other sacred centres of the region. The Baria celebrate Janmashtami, Holi, Dhuleti, Sheetala Satam, Rakhi, Diwasa, Dasara, Diwali and Makar Sankranti. Magico-religious specialists (Bhuwa/Bhagat) of the community treat people for various bodily ailments and suggest remedies. The Baria dance and sing on various occasions especially during marriage. They have *bhajan mandli* (group of devotional singers).

The Brahman priest is consulted on the occasions of marriage, death and religious ceremonies in the house. The Baria does the work of a barbar and also plays the drum on various festive occasions. The Harijan lifts the dead cattle in the village, so they do not accept food from the Harijans though they accept water from them. They do not share *hukkah* (hubble-hubble) with other groups. They share wells and crematorium with other communities in the village. Patron-client, landlord-tenant and cultivator-labour relationship are also found in the village. They are developing relationship with a number of occupational groups in the town. Political leadership has emerged at the village as well as at the regional with some Barias having been elected as Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The younger generation attends school. Girls however dropout almost immediately after primary levels while boys continue their studies further. The Baria avail of modern medicare and have positive attitude towards family welfare programmes. Their children benefit from the free mid-day meals in school and Baria have taken advantage of government loans for house-construction, and farm equipment, setting up grocery etc. They fully utilize the public distribution system for foodgrains. They use fire-wood, cow

dung, and kerosene oil as fuel. The general awareness of the world around them has been brought about by modern media.

L.N. Soni

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BARODIA

The Barodia are also known as Barud. They are also referred to as Wanspodia for their occupation of making bamboo baskets and mats (Enthoven 1922).

They are concentrated mainly in Surat district and are also distributed in the districts of Valsad, Baroda and Ahmedabad. The Barodias prefer to live within the urban environs so as to sell their bamboo baskets. In the 1981 Census, their population has been put at 17,759. They speak Marathi at home and with their kin while they use Gujarati for communication with outsiders. Gujarati script is used. They use Devnagari script for writing Marathi.

The Barodia are non-vegetarian. Their staple food includes wheat and *jowar* along with pulses and vegetables. A variety of locally available fruits are consumed occasionally. Tea is a common beverage and milk is given to infants only when the mother is unable to nurse them. Both male and female members consume alcoholic drinks.

The Barodia have 13 exogamous *ataks* or *kul*. These are, Kanunkar, Warlakar, Khaira, Lakawaruya, Supakar Kadushuar, Sanandalay, Nagarkar, Jamkar, Chinchandala, Hingarkar, Malthukar and Moray. All *ataks* are equal in status, they are exogamous and their chief function is regulating marriage alliances. They place themselves below the Brahman, Rajput and above the Chamar, Mochi and other scheduled castes.

The Barodia follow community endogamy, practising *kula* exogamy. Cross-cousin marriages in both the paternal and maternal sides is in vogue. The marriage age for girls ranges from the ages of 15-18 and for boys between 18-25. Marriages are settled through negotiations. Monogamy is the prevalent form though polygyny is also permissible. Both junior levirate and junior sororate are permitted and the system of bride-price in cash is prevalent. Post-marital residence is patrilocal though cases of the son-in-law staying with his parents-in-law are also reported.

Divorce, locally called *fargti* is permissible in cases of maladjustment between the spouses or in case of barrenness. A wife can seek divorce in case of impotency or adultery but in such cases the bride-price is to be returned. In case of her re-marriage, her new husband has to pay double the amount of bride price paid, by her former husband. The re-marriages (*natra*) involves brief ritual only. Widow and widower re-marriage are permitted. A widow is allowed to marry even a bachelor.

Nuclear family is the norm though extended families also coexist. Married women keep veil in front of their father-in-law and have avoidance relation. Joking relationships exist between younger brother and sisters of one's husband. The property inheritance follows the rule of male equigeniture. Succession is through the eldest son.

Women don't possess a right to property. They have role in domestic, economic and rituals activities. Women contribute to the family income by making bamboo baskets. Women have a status lower than that of their men.

Child birth takes place within the dwelling with the assistance of a midwife who is from the Nai or the Bhangi community. Pollution after birth lasts for forty days in the case of the mother and twelve days for the child. On the sixth day after birth the chattipujan, a ceremony in which offerings are made to the clan deity for the newborn is performed. This is the only major ritual.

Marriages are settled by the parents. The date for the ceremony is fixed by a Garodia Brahman. Tuesday is considered auspicious for marriages. Marriage ceremony begins with the application of turmeric paste to the groom and bride by five married women a few days before the *phera*. A day after ritual worship of the family deity or kula-devi, the marriage ritual starts. Senior members of the boy's clan touch a betel leaf to his head after which the wedding procession leaves for the bride's residence. The marriage rituals take place in a specially erected booth in front of the house. Application of vermillion on the hair parting of the bride, circumambulating the *mandap* five times by the couple brings the ceremony to an end. The newly married woman goes to her husband's house with the groom. The nuptial ceremony takes place in her husband's home.

The dead are cremated with the exception of small children

who are buried. Death rituals begin with the bathing of the body, application of turmeric paste on the corpse. The body is carried on a bamboo bier to the cremation ground for cremation. Mourners who gather at the house of the deceased contribute some money and they are served with tea or alcoholic drinks. Women of the family prepare *kichadi* (a gruel of pulses and rice) and share the same with relatives. On the twelfth day after death, the final purificatory rites are performed and the funeral feast is given.

The Barodia get their supplies of bamboo from the forest department at subsidised rates. Earlier (till 1961) they used to get up to 800 pieces of bamboo per month at subsidised rates. This figure has now been reduced to 810 pieces per annum in successive stages. Considering their skill in splitting bamboos and that on an average a family can easily utilize 3 pieces per day, this is a very small quota. Their actual requirement varies between 800-1000 pieces per family per annum. Adversity has forced them to take to other occupations, especially those living in urban areas, such as in textile mills and diamond polishing units and services both in private and government agencies. The Barodias are superstitious about their traditional bamboo craft as they believe that if they gave up their traditional occupation their clan deities will be displeased. That is one of the reasons why their women are continuing this whereas the men are increasingly opting for a variety of other vocations.

The Barodia have their own community panchayat headed by a *Patel*. Family quarrels are generally settled within the confines of the family but in case it goes to the panchayat for arbitration the panchayat's decision is final. The *Patel* may exercise the power of excommunication to the offender. They have also a community association, known as the Barodia Samaj. There is a Member of the Legislative Assembly belonging to this community.

The Barodia being Hindu perform major religious functions during *dussehra*. *Khanoba* is the chief deity. Apart from whom there are also clan deities who are worshipped on various occasions. Liquor is always offered to the clan deity. They visit Hindu pilgrim centres like Banaras and Haridwar etc. They observe all the major Hindu festivals and attend local level fairs as well. Music and dance are an important part of their major festivals such as *Holi*, *Dussehra* and *Diwali*. They have a rich folklore as well.

The Barodia have inter-community linkages on account of the fact that they have to sell their products in the market. They share numerous infrastructural and public welfare facilities with other communities. Although so far education has not made any impact on them, they are interested in having their children educated. They have positive attitude towards family welfare programmes.

N.K. Ghatak

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BAROT

The Barot claim to have migrated to Gujarat from Kannauj (Uttar Pradesh). Bakshi Commission Report (1976) states that the Barots are also known as Vahivanchas because their main profession involved keeping of the genealogical records of their clients. Sometimes they are also referred to as Vahivancha Charan Gadhvis. These records include details of birth, death and marriages in the families of their clients. They have a wide distribution but are mainly concentrated in the districts of Mehsana, Panchmahal, Baroda and Ahmedabad. They speak in Gujarati and a few also understand Hindi. They use Gujarati script. However, they use *dingal* script for keeping records in their books (*vahi*).

The Barot are purely vegetarian. The common cereals are rice, wheat and maize, Available pulses and vegetables are taken. Fruits are occasionally consumed but they abstain from taking liquor. Milk and milk products are an important part of the diet. Sweets made out of ghee, wheat and sugar are the special items for the pregnant women and nursing mothers.

The community have two sub-groups eg. Brahmbhat or Raj Barot and Vahivanchas. The former regards itself superior as they used to maintain the genealogy records of the royal houses and the aristocracy whereas the latter serve the commoners and also the people from castes placed low in the hierarchy. The two subgroups are strictly endogamous. There are territorial groups. In North Gujarat there are three territorial subgroups arranged in a hierarchical order among the Brahmbhats which are six village group, twelve village group and twentyseven village group. Formerly these groups intermarried but in recent times they have formed into endogamous units. These group are not at par in the social level. The six village cluster is at the top and the twenty seven village cluster is at the bottom. They have economic differentiation and mainly marry within the cluster. Such endogamous units have exogamous gotras such as Bharadwaj, Kashyap, Parasar, Bhrigu, Kapil etc. The Barot claim Brahman status on the grounds

that they are descendants of the union between a Brahman male and a Kshatriya female. Other communities rank them below Brahman and Rajput and higher than Suthar, Kumbhar, Luhar etc. in the local social hierarchy.

Monogamy is the main form of marriage among the Barot. The marriage age for girls is about 18 years while 20 years in the case of boys. Marriages are settled through negotiation. The old practice of bride-price has given way to dowry in cash and kind. The symbols of a married woman are vermillion on the parting of hair and wearing of bangles. Post marital residence is also patriolocal. Divorce is permissible. Re-marriage is not allowed and discouraged except in rare cases of barrenness and insanity of the first wife.

Nuclear families are becoming common than extended families. An individual is expected to have obligations towards his father's sister and his mother's brother. Relations between sons-in-law and the mother-in-law are based on avoidance. Joking relations exist between a man and the younger sister of his wife and between a woman and the younger brother of her husband. Sons inherit the property and share equally. Succession is through the eldest son. Women do not have a right to inherit father's property.

The Barot women and girls take part in social and religious rituals but do not participate actively in political affairs at any level. Some of them are in regular service either in government or in the private sector and contribute to the family purse. They also do the household jobs. Women though contribute to the family income yet they have an inferior social status. The authority in family management is vested with the eldest male.

Simanth or *Godhbarna* is a pre-delivery ritual performed in the seventh or the ninth month of pregnancy. Parents of the pregnant woman bear the expenses of this ceremony which is held at her husband's house. After this the parents take her to their home for confinement. On the sixth day after birth *Suraj Puja* and the naming of the new-born take place in which the father's sister names the child. The mother observes pollution for forty days after which she starts cooking. At the age of six months the child is given solid food for the first time and the family deity is worshipped. The investiture of sacred thread ceremony for a son is performed between the ages of 5-11 years. This is officiated by

a (Audich, Nagar or Tapodhan) Brahman. It is sometimes performed just before the marriage.

Marriages settled through negotiation which is marked by exchange of coconut and some money. The marriage ritual begins with installation of lord Ganesh. The *pithi* ceremony, in which turmeric paste is applied to the prospective groom and bride, is an important ritual and only after this the marriage is performed as per schedule already set. The groom in his ceremonial attire mounted on a horse takes a round of the village and start for the bride's house for marriage. This is called *varghoda*. The ceremony takes place in a booth or known as *chaura*. The principal rituals are the *hastmilap*, *havan* and the *phera* (circumambulation of the sacrificial fire) for four times by the couple. In the *kanyadan* ceremony the parents of the bride present gifts in cash or kind. A feast is arranged. The marriage party returns with the groom the next day along with the bride. Consummation of marriage takes place in her husband's home and she returns to her parental home on the first Diwali after marriage to celebrate it there.

The dead are cremated. It is carried to the cremation ground on a bamboo bier. Next day after cremation the ashes are collected in a new earthen pot and then immersed in river water. Death pollution lasts for thirteen days. The younger male members in the family have tonsure on the seventh day and then take purificatory bath. The *shradha* ceremony is performed on the twelfth day, officiated by a Brahman and on the thirteenth day a community feast is arranged.

The Barot possess cultivable land. The community have the combination of both the landowner and landless. Many do business. They are also in white collar jobs. The traditional vocation of genealogists and mythographers is on the decline for multifarious factors.

The community elders meet and try to defuse the conflict if there be any through negotiation and persuasion. Otherwise they seek legal redressal through the statutory bodies. The local civic bodies are mainly concerned about the implementation of developmental schemes.

The Barot celebrate all the major Hindu festivals like Diwali, Holi, Shivratri and Dussehra. On the occasion of Navratri, they perform *garba* dance. They make pilgrimage to all the sacred

places such as Benares and Somnath; Janmashtami or the Krishna's birth day is an important festival which they observe. Although all the dieties of the Hindu pantheon are worshipped, Durga or Ambaji is their patron deity who is revered especially in all life-cycle rituals.

The Barots interact with several communities partly on account of their traditional vocation which has further widened by modern linkages. They are in agriculture, in business and in white collar jobs. Brahman groups like Audichaya and Tapodhan not only perform their life cycle rituals but also accept food and water from them. The Barot, however, do not practice interdining with the castes considered lower and scheduled caste. They took full advantage of local governmental institutions such as the panchayat and they participate in politics both at local and regional level.

The Barot have attained satisfactory progress at the level of literacy and education. Both boys and girls go for high education. They avail of the benefits of modern medical care, the public distribution system and the mass media. In agriculture they have adopted improved methods of farming including the use of irrigation, chemical fertilizer and pesticides and of course electricity. They avail of modern banking facilities and their attitude towards family welfare programmes is positive.

D.K. Nanda

BAVRI

The word 'Bavri' is derived from the Gujarati word 'baw' or 'bav' which means steps or staircase such as those found inside a deep well. Bavris were in the habit of storing the foods in such wells found on the roadside. The Bavri were notified as a criminal tribe since early times and some of the erstwhile princely states in Saurashtra eg., Rajkot had issued notifications in 1917 about their criminal activities. They hail from Marwar, (Bakshi 1976). They claim that they were the the Rajputs of Marwar and Mewar regions, but after the fall of the Rajput Kingdoms some of them took to a nomadic way of life and to criminal activities. They are also known as Babri and Baori also. Bakshi (1976) reported that they are a semi-nomadic group, but presently a settled community. Majority of them live in urban or suburban locales. They are distributed in the districts of Ahmedabad, Godhra, Jamnagar, Amreli, Banas Kantha and Sabarkantha. They speak in Gujarati with their neighbours but within the kin group, they speak in Marwari liberally mixed with Gujarati. They use the Gujarati script.

They are non-vegetarians. They eat egg, fish, mutton and chicken. Their staple foods are rice, wheat, jowar, maize along with various kinds of pulses and vegetables. They are fond of liquor which they purchase from the market. They eat fruits very occasionally and as a special food they prepare *sera* (wheat flour, jaggery, ginger etc. boiled in water or in milk) to serve to the expectant and lactating mothers.

The Bavri are an endogamous group having three occupational categories; Kapadia — those who sell old garments, Magania — those who live begging and Chatania — those who live on begging and collecting or eating waste food. The third category is regarded socially inferior to the other two. These three groups which were earlier reported endogamous, however no longer observe this strictly. The community has exogamous clans, some of which are Chauhan, Parmar, Dave, Solanki, Suryavanshi, Raghuvanshi, Chandravanshvi, Bardihar, Rawat etc. Among the clans there is

no hierarchical order. Their own perception is that they are Kshatriyas, but neighbouring communities rank them as Sudra. In the social hierarchy they stand in the line of Vaghri (Bakshi, 1976). Monogamy is the social norm but sororal polygyny is also reported, especially on the death of first wife or on account of infertility of the first wife. Marriage of a boy or a girl is arranged at an early age. Marriages are settled through negotiation. Bangles, *sindur* (vermilion) on the forehead are the symbols of married women. Bride price is paid in kind and cash. Patrilocal rule of residence is followed. Divorce and widow remarriage called *natra* is allowed, but approval of caste panchayat is needed.

Majority of the families are nuclear. Vertical and horizontally extended families also co-exist. Married women have avoidance relationships with their husband's father and elder brother. Joking relationships exist between a man and the younger sister and brother of his wife. A woman has similar relationship with her husband's younger brother. A man has obligatory relation to his maternal uncle and father's sister. The Bavris follow male equigeniture rule of inheritance and succession rules follow male primogeniture. Inter-family linkage are based on fellow feeling and community sentiments.

The status of women in Bavri society is inferior in comparison to that of men. They do not have the right of inheritance in their father's property. They contribute to the family income. They work as daily labourers, collect fire-wood and participate in social and religious rituals. They bear the burden of household work, but they are not the decision makers in any family problems or in family management.

The Bavri women have first confinement in their paternal house. They take the assistance of a mid-wife from the Muslim community. They observe birth pollution for six days. The mother takes a purificatory bath on the final day and offers worship in a nearby temple. On the sixth day after birth they make offerings to the clan deity and the naming ceremony is performed by the younger sister of the child's father. 'Kanguru' is performed between five and six years of age in which child's father's brother acts as a *guru*. Sacred thread ceremony is performed between the ages of nine and eleven years officiated by a Garo Brahman. Marriage is preceded by betrothal (*saga*) which is done at an early age. The

betrothal ceremony takes place at the girl's residence. The parents of both sides fix a date for the marriage in consultation with Brahman. *Pithi*, *Ganeshsthapana*, *grahasanti* are the different rituals performed in marriage. On the first day of *pithi* a black thread with a betel nut and a metal ring is tied on the right wrist and the right toe of the bride and the groom in their respective houses. On the day of marriage they worship the potter's wheel and offer coconuts. The marriage procession with the groom goes to the bride's residence for solemnization of the marriage. Marriage rituals performed near the sacrificial fire include circumambulation (*phere*) of the fire, '*hasthamilap*' (joining hands of bride and groom) and '*kanyadan*' (giving the daughter as gift.) Next day the groom takes his wife to his residence where consumation of the marriage takes place.

They cremate their dead, The body is carried to the cremation ground on a bamboo bier, covered by new clothes. In the case of male deceased, the colour of the cloth is white and for female it is either red or pink. During the last journey the mourners rest for a while which is called as *vishama*. In the crematorium the eldest son lit the fire. Ashes are collected and immersed in river water on the third day. They observe death pollution for thirteen days. On the tenth day the sons and other kin get their head shaved. On the eleventh or twelfth day the *pindadan* (giving oblations) takes place. In the case of death of males *barma* ceremony takes place on the twelfth day but for a woman *terma* is performed on the thirteenth day.

The Bavri are extremely poor with no specific means of subsistence. They are a landless group and they suffer the stigma of being regarded as a criminal group by the rest of the society. They have taken to a variety of petty vocations such as selling vegetables; old clothes, metal artifacts etc. They live in bamboo huts with only a few being able to afford mud-walled construction. Begging is another source of income and both children and women are sources of labour in their community.

The Bavri community elders constitute the local caste council or *panch*. The members are elected taking into consideration of their age and experience. It settles the social or religious disputes. They impose punishment like excommunication or cashfine depending upon the severity of the offence. Criminal offences like

theft or murder are dealt with by the courts and police. Besides, there is also the statutory panchayat to implement developmental plans and programmes.

The Bavri profess Hinduism and worship the deities of the Hindu pantheon. Besides they also have their clan deities to whom they offer worship during their life-cycle-rituals. The clan deities are (Gurdgaon ville). Kheranmata (Chanchalavill) Kali (Godhra) in the worship of which Brahman priests do not participate. They visit local shrines and temples for which they engage the temple priest, but in their life-cycle rituals they are attended by different Brahman groups, Garo, Pandiya and Audichya. They are highly superstitious.

At home they make plastic household and decoration articles like plastic flowers and garlands, which they sell in the market. In their life-cycle-rituals they sing traditional folk songs.

Their linkages with other communities is minimal partly on account of their low status and partly because of their criminal background and also because they live on the periphery of urban locals. Most other communities do not exchange food and water with them. This affects their capacity to avail of civic amenities such as drinking water and water from public hydrants. They aren't within reach of these facilities. Modern inter-community linkages give them exposure to change their habits. They share crematorium, schools and panchayat institutions. Good communications have brought them into closer contact with the wider world. The major temples prohibit their entry partly because of the feeling amongst other communities that they are unclean and unhygienic.

Level of literacy is essentially very low. But the young are now attending school. They prefer the indigenous and traditional system of medicine than modern allopathic care. There is positive response in favour of modern family welfare programmes due to the economic incentives than to their awareness of it per se. They benefit from the public distribution of foodgrains and from the mid-day meals provided to their school-going children. They use cowdung as fuel and kerosene for lighting lanterns.

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BAWARCHI

The term '*bawarchi*' means cook. It is claimed that they migrated to India as cooks with the army of the first Moghul emperor Babar, about 400 years ago. They gradually migrated to serve as cooks to Governors or other representatives of Moghul emperors in Gujarat. The community name owes its origin to their profession. The community is distributed in Amhedabad city, Baroda, Surat and in other small towns and in a few villages of Kheda district. The Bawarchi speak a mixture of Urdu and Gujarati. They use the Gujarati script.

The Bawarchis are non-vegetarian. The common cereals are wheat and rice. *Tur* (pegeon pea) or *masoor* (green pea) are the comon pulses. The commonly eaten non-vegetarian food is beef (she buffaloe). Occasionally fish is consumed. They take vegetables like potato, brinjal etc. Fruit is consumed during the holy month of Ramzan. Milk and milk products are taken. Tea is the common beverage. The sweet dishes consumed on festive occasions are sheera (dish prepared out of Suji) *halwa* (prepared out of wheat flour) and kheer (a preparation made of rice and milk).

Many a Bawarchi suffix the term Sheik to their name. A few suffix *Bhattiara*. Although the community considers itself at par with other neighbouring communities. Others rank them low. They are treated higher than scheduled castes.

The Bawarchis marriages take place according to the Shariat law. The first cousins are preferred as mates and women are usually married at the age of 18 to 20 years while the age of marriage for males varies between 22 to 25 years. The Bawarchi practice monogamy. The *Nak ka kantha* (golden nose ring) is symbol of marriage. *Dahej* (dowry) is paid in the form of utensils. A fixed amount of Rs. 127.50 is paid as Mehar. Alternatively a sum of Rs. 501/- is promised as future payment. The Bawarchi follow patrilocl form of residence. Divorce is permitted though rare. Widow remarriage is allowed as per the Shariat.

Both joint families and nuclear families are prevalent amongst

them. Male equigeniture is the rule of inheritance. On the death of the father, the eldest son succeeds as head of the household. Close ties based on mutual help and obligation characterize the inter family linkages.

The Bawarchi women have low status as they have no right of property inheritance. The only exception is where there are only daughters. Women are confined to household activities. Women have little say in family expenditure. The advice of women is sought and given due consideration in social and religious matters.

During the seventh month of the first pregnancy of a woman, a ceremony called *Ghodbarna* is performed in which the pregnant woman is presented clothes and some sweets. After this, the woman is sent to her natal home. After delivery, a woman is treated as impure for a period of forty days after which she returns to her husband's home. Fui (father's sister) gives name to the child on the sixth day after birth in a ceremony called *chatti* (sixth). *Sunnath* (circumcision) of a male child takes place when he is between two to seven years of age and is conducted by a doctor. *Bismillah* (initiation) ceremony is performed within the household. After this ceremony the child starts going to Madrasa to receive formal and religious education. When the *mannath* (a religious desire) is fulfilled, the *mundan* (tonsure) of the first child is performed at the shrine of Mahmoodsa pir at Jamalpur *darwaja* in Ahmedabad city.

The initiative for marriage alliance is taken by the father of the prospective groom. He takes the help of a third person to arrange the match. After agreement between both families, the betrothal ceremony called *Mangani* takes place. A few male relatives of the groom accompanied by some women go to the prospective bride's house and present clothes and sweets to her. The wedding takes place within a period ranging from one month to three years after betrothal. *Iddi Innam* (festival gift) is given to the prospective bride and groom by their future in-laws. About 15 to 30 days before the *Nikah*, the consent of *Jamat* (caste council) is obtained by giving an application and paying an obligatory donation by both parties of the marriage. A day preceding the *Nikah*, the ceremony of *pittilagana* (application of turmeric paste) is performed. The wedding ceremony takes place either in the afternoon or at night after prayers. Prior to this, relatives and friends are fed and offered *sherbat*, milk or cold drinks. The nuptial ceremony is

arranged at the groom's house after which the bride returns to her parental house, for a brief period, and then she goes back to her husband's residence permanently. Only the first *Jummagi* is performed by the bride's family.

Regarding funeral customs the dead are buried within a few hours. Mourning is observed for a period of three days and during this period no food is cooked in the house of the deceased. After the burial and performance of *fateha*, the assembled mourners comprising friends and relatives are fed *Kitchadi* (a dish of rice and lentils) in the evening. *Dasma* (tenth day), *Beesma* (twentieth day), and *chalisma* (fortieth day) are intra-household functions. The occasion is marked by recitation from holy koran and a visit to the graveyard. The death rites are concluded with the *chalisma* a ceremony of prayer for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Regarding the changes that have been noticed in the Bawarchi rituals are that of circumcision being performed by a doctor instead of a Hajam or barber and the performance of wedding ceremony either at noon or in the night instead of exclusively only in the nights, in the course of the last ten years.

The Bawarchi community has an organised and registered caste council called Ahmedabad Muslim Bawarchi Jamat. This council is managed by a seventeen member executive committee which has a tenure of three years. Representation to the executive committee is based on locality. The members select a *Pramukh* (president), *Upa Pramukh* (Vice President), *Mantri* (secretary), *Sah Mantri* (joint secretary), *Khazanchi* (treasurer) and one honorary auditor from among themselves. The executive committee meets every month or once every two months to review various social activities and to give permission for marriage and divorce. The *jamaat* collects one rupee per household per year and it earns rent by letting out its property. The money collected is used to extend financial assistance (Rs. 50/-) per month to poor widows, bear expenditure of weddings of poor girls, supply funeral cloth to the needy and bear medical expenses of senior aged and sick members of the community. The *Jamat* has no power to punish the offender. The *Pramukh* and his associates bring pressure on the offender. The role of modern statutory councils is restricted to planning and implementing welfare activities for the community.

The Bawarchi belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. As the community

manages the shrine Pir Mohammed Sa-Bokhari in Ahmedabad city, they also actively participate in the 'Urs' held there. This shrine is also visited often to pray for fulfilment of *mannath* (vows) taken by individuals. Bawarchi also visit other local shrines of Muslim saints, viz. Virpura Khaja, Mohamad Dariyagi, Hazarat Sa Bava of Dholka and also the pilgrimage center at Ajmer. The services of any *moulvi* (sacred specialist) are employed for birth and marriage rituals. For the bathing of the dead, the services of the *Bhangisab* of the local mosque is utilized. All major festivals like Ramazan, Bakrid Moharram are celebrated. A number of people observe fast during the sacred month of Ramzan. Their women sing the songs on occasions of birth and wedding.

The Bawarchi have socio-economic relations with neighbouring communities especially the Alivi Bohras and the Daudi Bohras amongst Muslims and with the Rajputs, Harijans and Christians among non-Muslims. They interact only among themselves for ritual purposes. Commensal ties are confined to surrounding Muslim communities - as the Bawarchi do not accept nor exchange food with Harijans Bhangi and scheduled tribes. Traditionally, communities like Patels, Brahmans don't accept food or water from the Bawarchi. The community members share various facilities like the graveyard with the local Muslims, and share roads, school, drinking water facilities and entry into public offices with other communities.

Very few boys amongst the Bawarchi continue studies beyond school, while girls study only till the primary level. Owing to this, very few are employed in government sector. They prefer to visit the shrines of local saints for a cure rather than using modern medical care. During the last two decades the Bawarchi have developed a positive attitude towards the small family norm and the women get sterilised after three children. Most of the houses of the Bawarchi have electric connections. Being urban based, the Bawarchis are able to enjoy facilities of modern transportation and telecommunications. School-going children get mid-day meals. Only a few have savings bank accounts in banks. Besides from non-scheduled banks or co-operative banks, they take loans from money-lenders.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

BAYAD

The Bayad village of the erstwhile Dantha state in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat is said to be their original home and the community is named after their native place. According to a historical account, Khengarji I ran and took shelter from the Sultan of Ahmedabad after his father's Hameerji was killed by Jam Raval. He gave his elder sister in marriage to the Sultan and with the help of his army defeated Jam Raval and re-established Jadaki dynasty in the sixteenth century A.D. The Bayads came as soldiers in the army brought by Khengarji I. Thus as warriors, they came to *Vagad* region and from there migrated to Anjar and other areas of Kutch district. In Bhuj town there is a Bayad clan among the Rajputs who believe that some of the Bayads came under the influence of a Muslim saint and embraced Islam about 500 years ago and migrated from Kaklani of Rajasthan to Ahmedabad.

The Bayads are mainly distributed in Anjar town and a few live in Bhuj town of Kutch district. During the partition of Indian in 1947 many Bayads migrated to Pakistan. A few of them from either side visit each other as and when they get an opportunity. But they do not maintain marital relations. Katchchi is the dialect spoken and Gujarati script is used at home as well as in relation to thers. Very few educated ones know Urdu and Hindi.

The Bayad are non-vegetarian. *Bajri* and sometimes wheat are the common cereals. Roti (with rice and Kitchadi) and pulse during lunch and supper followed by butter milk in both the meals is their staple food. Meat of shéep, goat and very rarely of buffalo is consumed. All available vegetables and fruits are taken by the community used. Groundnut oil is used for cooking purposes. *Samiya* or some home made sweet is consumed during festivals like Ramzan and Bakrid.

The Bayad use community name as surnames. They consider themselves equal to other upper caste Hindus and Muslims and superior to all scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Marriages are performed as per Shariat (Muslim personal law).

Marriage with the cousin and within the community is preferred. Marriages are arranged by parents. Monogamy is the prevalent form of marriage. Wearing of *siri* (nose ring) is the symbol of a married woman. A fixed amount of rupees eighty is paid as *dahej* (dowry). Patrilocality is the rule of residence after marriage. Divorce and subsequent remarriage are permitted. Both widower and widow remarriages are permitted.

Nuclear families followed by vertically extended families are prevalent among the Bayad community. A woman observes avoidance in front of all the males elder than her husband. Father's sister gives name to her brother's first child. Sometimes the name is decided by the paternal grandparents of the child. Only sons have the right of inheritance. Pattern of succession is through male line. The community members interact mostly among themselves for ritual spheres. They interact with other Muslim communities for social and religious purposes.

The Bayad women have no right of inheritance. They are consulted for in social, ritual and religious activities but final decision is taken by her husband. She takes care of the cattle and sell the milk to the neighbouring houses besides attending domestic duties. A few of them earn as labourers in the cotton mill. On the whole, she has a low status.

Usually girl's parents arrange first delivery after performing *khore bharna* ceremony by presenting coconut, fruits, two sweets, *chuni* (used to cover upper part of the woman) on completion of the seventh month of first pregnancy. Delivery takes place at the house attended by an experienced mid-wife from Hajam community for which she is paid. Mother of the newly born baby is treated as unclean for forty days after delivery. Name is usually given within one day of birth or on sixth day by the child's father's sister. This is known as *chhatti* ceremony. When the child becomes one year old, first *mundan* (tonsure) is done at the *asthan* (local shrine) of saint Modh Kalkani or at any local shrine of a Muslim *pir* (saint). A Hajam does the circumcision of a male child between the age of four months to two years, preferably during summer season.

After the mutual consent, the *sayagi* (betrothal) ceremony is performed by presenting one or two *dagina* (silver or gold ornaments) with some sweets, *Ering* (ear ring), *chunri*, bangles and *zanzhar* (anklet) to the girl. *Nikah* ceremony is performed by

any *moulana* (sacred specialist) after paying *mehar* (three and half tolas of silver in the form of ornament or equivalent cash) followed by a feast given alone to the groom's party and the bride is brought to the groom's house where nuptial ceremony takes place on the same night. She is taken to her parents after she spends seven days. She is brought back permanently after a couple of days.

The dead are buried within eight to ten hours of death. The coffin box is covered with new *chunri* or plain coloured shawl, plain cloth or black cloth in case of death of married woman, male, children and widow woman respectively. *Ziarat*, *dasma* and *chalisma* on third, tenth and fortieth day respectively are performed. Mostly vegetarian food is served to the assembled relatives/friends on *ziarat* day. Recitation of holy Koran is carried out by a *Moulana* for which he receives the new cloth with which the coffin box is covered and some money from the relatives of the dead. By tradition, they perform *charia* ceremony by feeding all the members of community within one to four years after death.

Agriculture alongwith milk selling and military service in the erstwhile Jadeja kingdom was the traditional occupation of the Bayad community. Now selling of milk is the major source of income for most of the members of the community. Very few of them are working in Government and private organisations. Some of them are in possession of agricultural land but as there is no irrigation facility available, the educated members of the community have realised that agriculture without irrigation facilities is not rewarding. So there has been a shift to other occupations.

The community has caste council named Bayad Jamat at Anjar, Bhuj and Vadar villages in Kutch district whose main function is the general welfare of the community and to prevent divorce within the community. Each council consists of two *patels* only and there is no fixed tenure for the members of the community who are selected, if necessary, after Moharram festival. The council has no power to impose punishment to defaulters.

They belong to Sunni sect of Islam. The *Maulana* performs *zanda* (a few hairs are cut) at Anjar ceremony, at the *asthan* (local shrine). They also visit a woman saint shrine *Dadima ki Durga* at Anjar for fulfillment of their desires. Service of any *Moulana* are utilized for the life-cycle rituals.

As warriors the Bayad used to have relation with the ruling Jadeja Rajputs. They have socio-ritual linkages with other Muslim communities. They have occupational linkages with all the communities of the region. They accept water as well as food from other Muslim communities. The male members accept food from upper caste Hindus. Depending upon the personal relations, other community members are invited in their marriages and separate arrangements are made in such cases. They share school and road facilities with other communities. Their participation in political activities and public function is confined to the local level only.

Realising the importance of education, they are receiving formal education. However there is not significant change in female's attitude towards education. There are very few graduates among the males. They are making moderate use of modern medical care. The community as a whole has no positive approach towards family planning. Public distribution through fair price ration shop is within their reach. The school going children of the community are enjoying mid-day meal. Most of the community members are utilizing banking facilities some have availed of benefit under the employment guarantee or self employment schemes.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

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BHADDBHUNJA/BHARBHUNJA

The term 'bhadbhunja' is derived from the words '*bhad*' which means an earthen oven and '*bhunja*' which means to parch. It obviously refers to people who earn their livelihood by selling parched grains. A large section of the community has migrated from Rajasthan especially from Udaipur and Jodhpur regions in the recent past. At present their main distribution is in the cities of Surat and Ahmedabad. They communicate in Gujarati both within the kin group as well as with outsiders and use Gujarati script. Some know the Arabic language which they learnt in the *madrasas* (school which gives religious instruction in Arabic).

The Bhadbhunja are non-vegetarian in their food habit. They consume fish, chicken, mutton, beef and buffalo meat. Wheat and rice are the staple food but maize is also important as specially in the case of those who migrated to the state quite recently. They use pulses like, *tur*, *moong*, masur and groundnut oil is the medium of cooking. Vegetable and fruit consumption is moderate. Some increase in the use of pulses and vegetables has been taking place among them, due to sky-rocketing prices of non-vegetarian food. Tea and butter milk are the common beverages in their community.

The Bhadbhunjas have social divisions known as *Sakh* or (surname) such as Belem, Chauhan, Pawar, Bhati, Sayed, Dengar. All of them are of equal status, the function of these divisions being to regulate marriage alliances. They perceive a medium status for their community in the local social hierarchy.

The Bhadbhunjas are an endogamous community. Monogamy is the most common form of marriage. They prefer cross-cousin marriage, father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter being the preferred mates. Sororate and levirate marriages are allowed under certain circumstances. Though the system of adult marriage is prevalent, in some cases child-marriages have also been reported. Males are acquired by negotiation of parents/elders but marriage by mutual consent between the couple also

occur. The most common marriage symbol for women is the use of nose pin. The system of brideprice exists both in cash and kind. *Mehar* is paid by the bridegroom and residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce is allowed under certain circumstances but only the husband exercises this right. In case of divorce children are the liability of the father. Widow, widower, male divorcee and female divorcee are allowed to remarry. In recent times, there has been an increase in such remarriages.

The Bhadbhunjas live mostly in an extended family set up, though nuclear families are also found. Inter-family and interpersonal relations are cordial. Joking relationships exists between a woman and her husband's younger brother and sister and between grand parents and grand children. Avoidance relationship are maintained between a woman and her husband's elder brother and his father. Conflict and confrontation occur in respect of property and business matters. Right of inheritance is vested in the male line. However, *luani* i.e., 12% share is given to a widow from her husband's property. The eldest son becomes the head of the family on the death of his father.

The Bhadbhunja women do not enjoy equal social status to that of men, though they are participating in all the social, ritual and religious activities along with their menfolk. They do not play any role in the political sphere or in the mechanisms of social control. They control family expenditure, look after the children besides their household chores which includes the fetching of potable water. They are consulted in decision making within the family.

The Bhadbhunjas observe certain rituals in the event of birth, childhood, marriage and death. The pre-delivery ritual of *Kholavarani* (literally lap filling) is observed during the seventh month of pregnancy. The pregnant woman receives a set of new cloths, coconut etc. from her parents and the ceremony ends with a dinner for assembled relatives. The first delivery takes place at the woman's paternal home assisted by the *suyani* (local trained midwife). Well-to-do families take the pregnant women to either the local hospital or private maternity clinics. Post-natal restrictions are observed by the mother. The naming ceremony is performed on the sixth day known as *chhatti*. *Azan* (prayer call), is whispered into the ears of the new born. The father's sister selects a name

for the child on this occasion. *Mundan* (tonsure) ceremony is observed in the case of males only. Circumcision is compulsory for male children and it is performed any time between the age of six months to twelve years. *Aqiqa* ceremony is also conducted but no puberty rites are observed in case of girls.

Marriage among the Bhadbhunjas takes place in two phases, one is *magni* ceremony (to announce the marriage settlement) and the other is *sadi*, (the real marriage). On the day of *magni*, new clothes and coconut are offered to the bride alongwith a few ornaments. Sweets are also distributed among relatives. Three to seven days before marriage, the *pithi* ceremony takes place in both households. Women sing special songs on this occasion. On the day of marriage, *Mandavo* (marriage booth) is erected in front of the bride's house. In the late afternoon, close relatives and friends accompany the groom in a procession called *jan*. On the way women sing. When the *jan* reaches the bride's place, women relatives of the bride receive it. *Kazi* (the priest) solemnizes the marriage after instant payment of fixed *Mehar*. All the relatives and *jan* members of them are entertained with a feast. The wedding party of the groom returns home with the bride. The send-off ceremony of the bride includes *Mameru* (the receiving of gifts from the maternal uncle).

The Bhandhunjas bury their dead after the body is carefully bathed, perfumed and covered with a piece of new cloth, carried to the burial ground by close relatives and the *Maulana* (priest) recites verses from the Koran which includes the *fathia* (a particular chapter of the Koran) near the grave. On the third day after death, *Ziarat* is observed in the family. *Fateha* is recited for this occasion also and close relatives are served a meal. No food is prepared in the house of the deceased till the day of *ziarat*. Instead food is sent by the relatives of the family. *Dasma*, *beesma*, *trisma* and *chelam* ceremonies on the tenth, twentieth, thirteenth and fortieth day respectively are also performed. Some of them also observe *Varsi* after one year. On such occasions, only the *Fathia* is recited by the *Maulana*.

The traditional occupation of the Bhadbhunja is purchasing of food-grains like paddy, gram, ground-nut, maize, peas etc. which is processed and sold in the form of fried and parched gram through family owned shops. Thus this is a family based activity.

The Bhadbhunjas earlier purchased their whole grains from the farmers who were paid in kind in the form of a half-share in the quantity of the fried grains, but presently they purchase the grain from the market and also sell their products in the open market. They also sometimes hire labourers from the Chamar community in case the family does not have enough working hands.

Bhadbhunjas have their own traditional caste council, the Jamat Gilkhan Afroj which takes care of the mechanism of social control. The *jamat* is a democratic organization consisting of eleven executive members, holding the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and six other members. The post of the President is called *Dhara-dhoran* (rules and regulations) for observance by the members of the community. Forms of punishment meted out to offenders are mostly in the form of cash fines.

The Bhadbhunjas belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. They visit *dargha* (shrines of pir) in times of crisis. They observe Id, Ramzan, Moharram with enthusiasm. A few of them perform *namaj* (religious prayer) regularly at the local mosque. They take the help of local *Moulana* (religious priest) to perform social and religious functions. They sing *qawalli* on the occasions of religious functions.

The Bhadbhunjas maintain close links both of a social as well as economic nature with other Muslim groups of the region. They accept cooked food from all Muslim and Hindu communities excepting the three communities of Dhed, Chamar and Bhangi who are regarded as of inferior status by tradition. They do not allow inter-community marriages and their children are sent both to the local *Madrasa* (religious school for learning Arabi) and also to public government schools. They participate in political activities at the local level. Being backward educationally, the community has very few members in the services and professions.

Literacy levels of the community is very low. Bhadbhunjas who live in and around urban areas derive the advantages of some public facilities such as drinking water through hand pumps or even piped water. Although they utilize the services provided by modern hospitals and public health facilities, equally they rely on the traditional system of medical care especially in the practice of visiting holymen who try to cure ailments. Their attitude towards family planning is not very favourable. They are exposed to modern

media, television and cinema. They also have access to roads, railways and post offices and also to the system of public distribution of food grains. The Bhadbunja children avail of the mid-day meal scheme. They take advantage of modern banking facilities. Nevertheless the Bhadbunjas were in the shores of an occupational crisis because the competition in the market for fried and parched grains is acute with the entry of some other communities.

Jyotirmoy Chakraborty

BHAMBI/KHALPA

The name Khalpa has been derived from the word *khal* meaning carcass of a dead animal and those who work on *khal* are called Khalpa. Regarding the origin of this community legend goes that there was one family of higher caste consisting of four brothers. It so happened that a cow died one day. As there was none to remove it, the youngest brother carried the dead cow to the forest. Thereafter, he was entrusted with this work by his brothers and in course of time he was made to remove the skin and hide from the dead animals. The Khalpa are sometime called *Chamkatiyas* or *Rohit*, in place of Khalpa. They speak in Gujarati and they use Gujarati script. They have been clubbed with the Chamar groups. They have been listed under the category of scheduled castes.

They are non-vegetarian. They take fish, egg, mutton. They consume pork occasionally. Their staple food includes rice, *nagli*, wheat along with various types of pulses and seasonal vegetables.

They have a number of exogamous clans. Some of these are : Chauhan, Parmer, Katariya, Goel, Solanki, Kothari etc. The clans are of equal status. The Khalpa is a patrilineal society. They perceive their position in the *varna* category of Sudra. Other castes people put them in the category of Harijan which occupy the lowest position in the local hierarchy.

They practise community endogamy and clan exogamy. Monogamy is the socially approved rule of the society, though polygyny is also allowed on specific conditions, occasionally. Marriageable age of girls ranges from 16 to 18 years while of boys from 18 to 22 years. Negotiated marriage is preferred. *Sindur*, (vermilion) and bangles are the symbols of a married women. Dowry is paid in kind. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Remarriage (*natron*) and divorce for both men and women are permitted in the society, but prior approval of the traditional caste *panch* (council) has to be obtained. Compensation is given to the aggrieved party. But in the marriage of a divorcee or a

widow with an unmarried one then the marriage is symbolically performed with a tree locally called *samrdi*. This marriage with the tree is also officiated by a Brahmin priest.

Traditional joint family is now no more the norm. Nuclear families have come into vogue. Young brother's wife always avoid the elder brother of her husband. Likewise, daughter-in-law has the avoidance relations with her father-in-law and vice-versa. Elder brother's wife has joking relations with husband's younger brothers and younger sisters. Sons inherit the property of father in an equal proportion. Eldest son succeeds the father.

The Khalpa women look after the household affairs and also help their husbands in agricultural work. Some educated Khalpa women are in service in government and non-government organizations. They take part in social and religious rituals too. The social status of women is inferior in comparison to menfolk. Women do not have any right to inherit her father's property.

Godbharva is the pre-delivery ritual generally held on an auspicious day during seventh or ninth month of pregnancy. After the delivery, the new mother remains for nine days with her child in confinement. On the third day of birth, the mid-wife cuts the nail of a new born child and of mother. Old experienced women serve as midwife. Naming ceremony of the new born is a post-natal ceremony observed on the sixth day after birth. On that day the *kuldevi* is worshipped. The mother is allowed to resume her normal work after taking a purificatory bath on the tenth day.

The finalisation of the match is established through *sagai*. *Sagai* is held at the house of both parties separately. Only elderly male members of the family and friends attend this function. The date for marriage is fixed. *Ganesh sthapan* is also observed before the marriage day. Marriage is solemnised at the bride's place. The groom with the party is received by the mother of the bride. Both bride and groom circumambulate *havan* (sacrificial fire) for seven times. Bride's parents arrange the community feast. The same evening groom returns home with the bride. Consummation of marriage takes place at groom's residence. Marriage feasts are strictly of vegetarian nature.

After death, the corpse is laid the ground. The body is carried on a bamboo bier. Fire from the house is carried in an earthen pot. If

the deceased is a pregnant woman or a person died because of small pox or leprosy, they bury the body. Death pollution is observed for twelve days. On the tenth day, the chief mourner changes his old clothes. On the eleventh (if the dead is female) or on twelfth day (in case of male) the funeral feast is arranged. If a married man dies, the widow makes seven *phere* (reverse direction) of the body of the dead husband before removing the marriage symbols. This indicates the dissolution of the marriage. The widower makes the mark on the dead wife's forehead.

Majority of the families have now left their traditional occupation. Now they mainly subsist on agriculture and on jobs in government or in private agencies. Only a few are practising their traditional occupation.

Besides the statutory gram panchayat the community has their own caste *panch*. Fifteen executive members are inducted from different villages. The executive posts are President, Vice-President Secretaries (one would be a woman) and one cashier. The *panch* looks after the welfare of the community members and also settles marriage disputes, divorce and property rights etc. There is an organisation at the community level called *Khalpa Mahamandal*. This *Khalpa Mahamandal* looks after the welfare of the community members.

They are Hindu by religion and worship God and Goddesses like other Hindu castes or communities. They worship *Unai mata* as the local or regional deities. They worship the *kuldevi* during Dussera and on occasions of life - cycle rituals. In the month of *Baishakah* and *Ashar*, on any Sunday and or any Tuesday they worship the deity *Pothar*. This festival is locally called *Jhanpi Ka Puja*. They worship *Kundimata* with the hope of receiving good result in tanning of skin or *khal*. On this occasion, they worship the big earthen pots in which they tan the skin. They worship *Musha bhut*. *Musha* was a man of Banjara community who died of an accident. In the past, *Musha* had some conflict with *Khalpas*. *Holi*, *Diwali*, *Dussera* festivals are also celebrated by them.

They share the facilities of school, crematorium, etc. The community people take part in local public function at taluka as well as at district level. Landowner-labourers relationship is based on mutual co-operation and understanding. In village, they share the source of drinking water with other communities.

Literacy level is very low among the people of old generation. But it is appreciably high among the younger generations. Girl also study up to school level. They favour family welfare programme. They avail modern medicare. The people are aware of rural employment programmes. For activities related to agriculture and tanning, they get financial assistance under the scheme of self employment. They use coal, wood, cow dung cakes etc as fuel sources. They use chemical fertilizers and insecticides for high yield. They avail of various government sponsored nutrition programmes and also the facilities of public distribution system and banking facilities.

D. K. Nanda

BHAMBI/ROHIT

The Rohit consider themselves the followers or descendants of the Rohidas (a famous saint) so they identify their group as Rohit after the name of the revered saint. Traditionally, they did the work of leather or hide works and was also identified a Khalpa, but in the year 1947 a group of Khalpa organised and decided to identify themselves as Rohit. It was also decided by them to abandon all kinds of leather work. Since then, the Rohits have left their traditional occupation of working on hides. The Rohit claim to have originally sprung from the union between a Rajput and a low caste woman. In the Census of 1961, Rohits have been identified as one of the fifteen sub sections of the Chamar caste. They are distributed in almost all the districts. They are mainly distributed in Kaira, Surat, Ahmadabad and Baroda districts. Rohit mainly speak in the dialect of Gujarati of the region where they live and use Gujarati script. A few of them are also able to speak in Hindi languages. They have been listed under the category of Scheduled Castes and clustered with Chamar.

The Rohit are a non-vegetarian group, they take egg, fish, meat etc. They also take pork. Now they strictly avoid taking beef. The common cereals are wheat and rice. They use roots and tubers, regularly. They also take vegetables. They take tea regularly. Both males and females take alcoholic drinks. Now they show partial aversion towards alcoholic drinks particularly the women. They purchase it from market. Males smoke bidi and tobacco.

The community has a number of exogamous divisions locally called *ataks*. Again it is divided into territorial endogamous groups called *gol*. The clans enjoy equal social status. Clan members participate actively to help the family in life-cycle rituals. They use *atak* names as surnames, Rohit is also used as surname. In the local social hierarchy the Rohit are clubbed with Chamar and treated as low by other castes. They claim that they are higher than the Bhangis. All the clean castes are considered higher by

them. Also they claim that they are socially higher than the Chamar and Khalpas. Now they avoid social interaction with those groups who still pursue the work on hides. Actually, they have formed a separate group having an endogamous entity.

The community is an endogamous one, and follow clan exogamy. Marriages are settled through negotiation. Monogamous type of marriage is the norm, though serial polygyny is also practised. Symbol of marriage is *sindhur* or vermilion on the parting of hair or on forehead. The traditional custom of paying bride price is discouraged. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce is permitted and both males and females may seek divorce. The cases of divorce are settled by *Nath Panch*. Remarriage is permitted for the divorcee, widow and widower.

Nuclear type of family is the norm but extended type of families also coexist. They have joking relationship with the members of affinal kin, specially between wife's younger sisters and husband's brothers. Rules of inheritance follows male equigeniture and succession through the eldest son. All the family members work together to contribute to the family's income.

The Rohit society does not allow a woman to inherit property. But in the matters of social or religious affairs, they are considered equal and play significant roles. They contribute directly to their family's income by making and selling baskets and other materials. They enjoy a status lower than that of their men.

Delivery takes place in the house. The pregnant mother is attended by a mid-wife, from Nai caste. In recent times some Rohit families admit the pregnant woman to a hospital for safe delivery. Post-delivery pollution is observed by the mother for forty days and for others it is twelve days. On the sixth day, observe *chhattipujan*. Name giving ceremony is performed on the eleventh day and the name is given by the child's father's sister.

Marriage is settled by the parents of the bridegroom and the bride in the presence of caste men and *Karbhari* (headman) Brahman (Garoda) fixes the date of marriage. Anointing the turmeric paste to the bride and the groom takes place at their respective houses these days before marriage. The marriage is solemnised at the bride's house. The wedding procession, *jan* starts from the house of bridegroom. The bridegroom carries a dagger or a sword. At the time of marriage, the bride and bridegroom sit facing each

other. The Garoda Brahmin priest presides over the ceremony. He throws rice grains over the couple and puts bride's hands into the bridegroom's hand. After this the couple takes seven rounds around the sacrificial fire, *havan* (holy fire). In the first three rounds the groom leads the bride while in the last four the bride leads. The groom with the bride returns to his house the next day. She comes back within five days and thereafter goes back to bridegroom's house. The consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's house.

The dead are cremated. In case of death of young children and pregnant woman, the dead are buried. The corpse is covered white cloth in case of male and red clothes for women. The dead body is carried in a bier to the crematorium. The corpse is taken around the pyre on it. The eldest son lits the pyre first. They light a lamp at the place where the deceased had breathed his last. The bones and ashes collected on third day are immersed into the water of a nearby river. On the twelfth day, the final funeral rites are observed. The Garoda Brahman preside over the rituals. The chief mourner offer oblations in the name of the deceased. A lamp is kept lighted though out the night. There remains a community feast on the twelfth day. Next day, the house is cleaned. The materials offered or used in funeral rituals are disposed off out of the habitation area.

Traditionally their occupation was linked with hides of dead animals. They have left this occupation and have taken to diverse occupations like working as day labour in shops, services, etc. All the family members earn and contribute to the family income. Children below the age of 15 years also go for earning.

The Rohit have *Nyat* panchayat or community of elders. This panchayat is controlling the social affairs of the community, connected with marriage, divorce, remarriage, widow marriage etc. From this community there are elected members in the statutory gram panchayat. This looks after the implementation of developmental schemes.

The Rohit profess Hinduism and believe in Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Their main goddess is *Kalika mata*. They worship Shiva and Krishna and other gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon. They observe the various Hindu rituals and festivals. The Hindu pilgrim centres are the sacred centres for them.

The Rohit are one of the groups relegated to a low status. Both *kachcha* and *pucca* food are not accepted from this group by the castes which are placed high in the local social hierarchy. They have access to school the panchayat houses etc.

The Rohit put lot of emphasis on education as a means to raise improve their status. They favour education for both sons and daughters. They are also showing greater interest in politics. They are trying to get much benefit from the Government welfare programmes. Attitude towards family planning programme is favourable, most of the elderly people have undergone sterilisation. They are enjoying facilities of road, banks, electricity and ration-shops. Fire wood, coal, kerosene are used as fuels. The banking facilities and fair price shops are available to them. They are dependent on shop keepers and money lenders.

N.K. Ghatak

BHAMBI/SINDHI MOCHI

The Bhambi migrated to India from Sindh (now in Pakistan) long back. Hence, they are called Sindhi Mochi. Those who make and repair footwear are called Mochi. The Sindhi Mochis are concentrated in Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad and Kheda districts. They speak Gujarati and use the same script. They belong to Scheduled Castes.

Sindhi Mochis are non-vegetarians and take fish, egg and meat of goat. Their staple food is rice and *roti* of wheat and *bajra* (millet). The community consumes *tur*, *moong* and pulses. The Sindhi Mochi use groundnut oil for cooking purpose. They consume alcoholic drinks regularly which they purchase from local brewers. They smoke *bidi* and chew betel. The women take snuff also. Use of milk in diet is also quite common among them.

The Sindhi Mochi have exogamous clans such as Parmar, Solanki, Bagela, Rathod, Gohil and Chauhan. The main function of the clan is to regulate marriage alliances. They affix clan names with their names. They perceive themselves as having low status in the social order. They are aware of Hindu Varna order, and place themselves in Sudra varna. The other communities also perceive them as low in social order.

The Sindhi Mochis are endogamous at community level and exogamous at clan level. Junior sororate and levirate are allowed. Age at marriage ranges from 18 to 20 years for girls and 20 to 25 years for boys. Mode of acquiring a mate is through negotiation. Monogamy is the usual form of marriage. Wearing ivory bangle or lac is the symbolic identification of a married woman. Gifts in cash and kind are given by the father to his daughter, which depends on the economic conditions of the father. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce is not permissible. Remarriage of both widow and widower are permissible. There is no significant change in the marriage rules except increase in the age at marriage.

Mixed extended type of family is predominant among the Sindhi Mochi. Daughter-in-law avoids her father in law. The relationship

between a woman and her husbands' elder brother is of avoidance type. A man and woman can cut jokes with their elder brother's wife vice-versa and one's wife's younger brother and sisters. Nuclear families are now found to be cropping up in place of extended families. All the sons share equally the deceased father's property. Succession is through the eldest son.

Women are not entitled to inherit the property. Women's most important household duties include collection of fuel and in fetching potable water. They earn and contribute to their family income but they are not given a free hand to control family expenditure. On the whole women enjoy a low status.

On an auspicious day during the seventh month of pregnancy, the *khola barna* ceremony is observed. On this occasion parents give gifts, in cash and kind to their pregnant daughter. After the child birth, *chatti puja* is performed on the sixth day for the well being of the mother. Both the mother and the baby are given ceremonial bath. The baby and the mother remain secluded in the delivery room, till the pollution period of the mother continues. Thereafter, the mother is allowed to enter into the kitchen. Father's sister gives a name to the child. They observe *mundan* (tonsure) ceremony of boys at the age of four or five years. The boy's head is shaved ceremonially and worship is performed for a happy and prosperous life of the offspring.

Two or three days before the marriage day, *pithi* (paste of turmeric powder) and oil is rubbed on the body of the bride and groom at their respective houses. The bridegroom along with his relatives and friends goes to the house of the bride on the scheduled marriage date. The bridegroom is received ceremoniously by the bride's mother, and other women of the bride's family. Bride's father gives away his daughter to bridegroom in *kanyadan*. The couple then circumambulate the sacred nuptial fire four times to accomplish the marriage union. The bride wears *chur* (bangles). A feast is provided to the bride groom's party. The couple returns to bridegroom's father's place the next day where the consummation take place. Dancing sessions are held in which the newly married couple also participates.

Holy Ganga water and silver coins are put in the mouth of the deceased at the time of his last breath. The dead body is ceremonially bathed and covered with a new cloth. It is carried to

the cremation ground by the sons and relatives on a bamboo bier. The eldest son lights the first fire in the pyre and then others follow. The ashes and remaining bones are collected by the eldest son on the third day and immerse in river Saraswati near Sidhpur town. The priest selects an auspicious day for the performance of the *Sradha* (obsequies rites). *Mrituyabhoj* (funeral feast) is arranged by the deceased's sons on that day for the kin, relatives and friends.

The traditional occupation of the community is hide work, which they still pursue. They are also engaged in services of various categories, in private government organizations. They are unable to improve their economic situation due to the mechanization of the footwear industry.

They have their caste council which is called *Bagarchabishu*. The body consists of eleven persons elected on the basis of mutual consensus. The head of this institution is called *Mukhia*. The function of *panch* is to settle disputes and conflict of the community members. The guilty person is penalised in cash ranging from rupees eleven to hundred and one. In some cases when a guilty person fails to honour *panch*'s verdict, he is ostracized from society. The role of the statutory panchayat is mainly to plan and implement development programs.

The Sindhi Mochi profess Hinduism. Their community diety is Chamunda. They worship Ganeshji and Narsinghji. They also offer prayer to all the Hindu gods and goddesses of wider pantheon. The sacred specialist is from their own community. Their sacred pilgrim places are Junagadh, Chotilla, Hardwar, Rishikesh, Lakshmanjhula. The main festivals observed by them are Holi, Janmasthami, Navaratri (Dassera) and Diwali. The most important fair of the Sindhi Mochis is Janmasthami Mela. They also observe the birthday of their *guru* Trikonjee and on this occasion a fair is held.

Women of the Sindhi Mochi have dexterity in knitting designs over plain cloth. Menfolk have expertise in preparing decorative foot wear. The migration of the community from Sindh area is recalled in their oral tradition. They use percussion musical instruments for playing music.

The Sindhi Mochi consider Chamar and Bhangi as polluted castes and place them lower in position. They neither accept nor

exchange food and water with them. They accept food and water from the clean castes, but the latter do not accept food and water from them. They visit religious shrines with other communities. Patron-client relationship are prevailing with the customer and middlemen. A major section of them are small entrepreneurs. Political leadership has emerged at village panchayat level.

Formal education is favoured for boys. A few boys are found studying in colleges. But a large number of them drop out from the studies because of poverty. Attitude of the Sindhi Mochi towards modern medicare is encouraging. They also make use of traditional medicare. Young couples have started using modern methods of family planning. Drinking water is available within the locality through water taps. The community members are fond of listening radio, watching television and seeing movies. Communication facilities are available. They use electricity, kerosene oil, coal, firewood for fuel. They avail of public distribution system through fair-price shop.

S.R. Maitra

BHAND

The Bhands are also known as Bhand Raja who originally migrated from Rajasthan. Among them, those who live in Gujarat are called Gujarati Bhand and those who after having come from Rajasthan moved into different parts of Gujarat but went back are called Rajasthani Bhand. It is believed that they are originally Rajputs in the past. They are scattered in different areas. A large number of them live in Ahmedabad and other big cities and others in villages. Gujarati language and script are used by them but a large number can also speak Hindi. They were 141 (1901) including 89 males and 60 females, are found chiefly in Kathiawar (Enthoven, 1920).

They are non-vegetarian but they do not eat pork or beef. The staple food grains are *bajra*, wheat, rice various types of pulses except lentils. They eat all varieties of vegetables. They take milk and milk-products occasionally but liquor consumption and *bidi* smoking are quite prevalent among them.

The Bhand Raja have two broad territorial divisions. Gujarati, those who have settled permanently and Rajasthani, those who come in trips and some times go back to Rajasthan. These subdivisions though now intermarry maintain their separate identity. They have various *ataks* (clans) such as Chauhan, Rathod, Parmar, Kathani, Solanki etc. These *ataks* are of equal status.

The Bhand prefer negotiated marriage but there are some cases of self arranged marriages. The practice of cross-cousin marriage is prevalent among them. Marriageable age for boys is 20 years and that for girl's is 18 years. Child marriage was an earlier practice but now it is totally absent. Both junior sororate and junior levirate marriages are allowed. The customary payment of a minimum of Rs. 300 as the bride-price is prevalent. Wearing of a full sari, *bindi*, on forehead, vermilion on the-parting of the hair and the wearing of a *mangalsutra* (black bead necklace) (chain) and *Jhanjjar* (anklet) symbolize married status of the woman. The practice of *Kanyadan* (gifting the daughter to bridegroom) prevails to a limited extent. *Ghargharnu* (widow remarriage), though absent

earlier, is now permitted. Divorce is allowed. There is no practice of giving maintenance allowance; sometimes the husband and his family demand the return of the bride price.

Bhand families are mostly of the extended-type but there has been a gradual increase in nuclear families. All sons have an equal share in the inheritance. Succession is through the male line. Inter-family linkages and inter-personal relations within the family are cordial. There is avoidance relationship between the daughter-in-law and the father-in-law, but joking relationships prevail between a woman on the one side and the younger brother and younger sister of her husband on the other and similarly between a man and the younger sister of his wife.

Females have no right to a share in the ancestral property. Status of Bhand women in comparison to that of men is low. Women however work as labourers for the maintenance of their family. They shoulder the main burden of and strive hard to make both ends meet.

Khola-bharva (literally lap filling or *Srimant* is performed on a day fixed by the astrologer during the seventh month of a woman's first pregnancy, which is attended by her mother. She is taken to her natal home for delivery. After birth, the child is bathed. While the child's mother bathes ritually only on the sixth day's. *Chatti* ceremony in which worship is offered to the Kula-devi, naming to the child by her husband's sister followed by a feast to a few children. Birth pollution lasts for forty days and on the morning of that day, she bathes and performs *jal puja* (worship of the well) and becomes pure. *Bal Movara* (tonsure) ceremony is performed only in the case of a male child in which the barber shaves the child's head in front of the image of the *Kula-devi*. The sister of the child's father collects the hair and relatives partake a feast. Menstruation-pollution continues for six days.

Marriage ceremony among them is simple. Eight to ten days before the marriage, female relatives and friends of the bride sing songs every evening. On the day of marriage, the bride and bridegroom are rubbed with turmeric paste. An Audichya Brahmin erects the *mandap* (marriage booth) and performs the ceremony of installing the idol of Lord Ganapati. The marriage is solemnised in the bride's house. At the auspicious moment, the right hands of both of the bridal and the groom are joined together in *hasta*

milap after which they circumambulate the sacred fire for four times. The bridegroom takes the bride to his home carrying along with her the clothes, ornaments and other articles given to her by her parents called *paheluana*. Celebration of *suhagrat* (consummation of marriage) completes the marriage ceremony. After ten days or so she returns to her parent's home. On the day of Holi or Diwali the bride accompanied by her brother returns to her in-laws along with the new clothes, ornaments and utensils (given by her father) known as *bijuanu*.

The Bhands cremate their dead. Children below six years of age are buried. The eldest son of the deceased acts as the chief mourner. Ashes and bones after the cremation are gathered in an earthen pot and immersed in the river Saraswati or Dharmakunda within three days of the mourning period. On the tenth day *Khar Khara* or (breast beating) is done by the female-relatives. On the twelfth day, the Brahmin performs the *karma kanda* ceremony while the *shradha* ceremony is performed by the chief mourner. Gifts are given to the Brahmin on this occasion. During the first half-yearly or *chhamasi shraddha* is performed and gifts given to the Brahman. The annual *shradh* is performed in the latter half of every 'Bhadarva' (Sept.-Oct.).

At present because of the disappearance of the princely states and the decline of traditional forms of entertainment, the Bhands have taken up alternative means of subsistence which includes manual labour and setting themselves up in petty businesses. A few of them continue with their ancestral vocation in return for alms travelling to different villages and towns. Boys in age group of ten years also do labour job. The same is the case of girls. They never go for labour work among the Kharwa people.

They have a *jati punch* (caste council) in some places because their population is small and their households are scattered. They have one *jati Patel* for every 20 to 25 households whom they meet once a year to discuss their problems. The caste council is elected by a voice vote. Problems of property, *chhuta-chhada* (divorce), remarriage, deviance from the rules of the caste are mediated by this council.

The Bhand Rajas follow the Hindu religion. Each sept has a separate *Kula-devi* (the family deity). Each family has a separate *Bhuva* (religious functionary) to propitiate the deities such as

Ashapura, Kameshwari, Khodiar etc. They worship these deities during Navratri or on the occasions of life-cycle rituals. They worship other Hindu Gods such as Shiva, Rama, Ramapir and Hanumanji. They celebrate Holi, Diwali, Janmashtami, Shivratri. They visit Somnath, Dwarka and other places of Hindu pilgrimage. Audichya Brahman are their sacred specialists.

Professionally they are wandering artists who play act or assume the roles of various historical social characters. They do so by adopting multifarious variations in their dresses and by painting their faces with various colours. They are also skilled in the art of making peculiar sounds through one side of their mouth known as *gal bajana*. High caste communities and members of princely groups are their chief patrons. In return they receive their fee in the form of money or food grains or vegetables. Presently however they face a critical situation because their art and skills are declining in popularity.

In olden times, they had linkages with royal families and with the land holding people like Kathi, Maiya Darbar etc. Bhands used to appear at the harvesting season to collect their traditional alms which included food grains as well. There was no such interaction between them and the scheduled castes. They never visited the homes of these people. However all this is changing on account of the new modes of living that the Bhands have been forced to adopt. When they go for labour-jobs they cannot maintain any distance with their co-labourers who belongs to the Scheduled castes but they still avoid commensal relations with the Chamar, Bhangi, Mochi but not with the higher castes like Lohana, Baina, Ahir, Kanbi, Brahman etc.

The Bhands are educationally backward though their boys have now started attending *Bal mandirs* and schools. Their children avail of the mid-way meal scheme. Formerly they depended only on indigenous medicines for health problems but now they have started availing of modern medicines and medical facilities. Family planning programme has received more response from Bhand women who go in for sterilisation. Their women take the ICDS programme. Public Distribution system and banking facilities are utilised by them.

Aditi Mukherjee

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BHANDARI

The Bhandari are immigrants from Maharashtra. The word *bhandari* in Marathi means a store keeper, one who is in charge of foodgrains or the treasury. Enthoven (1920) states that "they are also known as called Bhavagunas and called Madkaras to the south of Gangavoliri river in the Kanara district". Their occupation was drawing toddy from palm trees and their name probably derived from the Sanskrit *mandharak* which means a distiller (Bombay Gazetteer). According to mythology some Vaisyas were put in charge of the '*bhandar*' (food grain store warehouse) married Brahman girls and came to be called Bhandari. The Kuberi Bhandari were those traditionally in-charge of the treasuries, while another account states that they were in-charge of the treasuries of Lord Indra during the Satyayug after which they left for Sindh during the battle between the *devatha* (gods) and *rakshasa* (demons). From there they migrated into Gujarat and settled on the banks of Tapi river in Vapi town. Thane district in Maharashtra is believed to be their original habitat, from where they migrated to Surat and Valsad districts. There are three endogamous groups, depending upon the territory they inhabit viz. Kuber Bhandari distributed in 110 villages lying from south of Tapi river to Vapi town. Kalgara Bhandari live on seacoast stretching from Nargoli village in Umbergeon taluka in Valsad District to Dahanu taluka in Maharashtra state depending mainly on fishing and Maharashtrian Bhandari who live in the border villages bordering Maharashtra. Besides the above mentioned places a few also live in the union territories of Daman and Silvassa in Dadra and Nagar Haveli. A few members of the community have settled down in Bombay and Baroda cities in recent years in search of a livelihood. But Enthoven (1920) states that there are eight divisions amongst them in the Bombay presidency. Their population was 1, 68, 667 (1901). Their area is comparatively fertile river bed possessing irrigation facilities. They speak in Gujarati and use Gujarati script both amongst themselves and for communicating with outsiders.

The community is non-vegetarian in its food habits. Usually they take meals twice a day called *zamnanu* (lunch) and *khadu* (supper). Rotis made of wheat and jowar and rice are the staple food. Mutton, chicken, fish and eggs are non-vegetarian foods they consume but beef is forbidden. Jowar is the principal cereal they take. Rice and wheat are also taken some times. All vegetables, or available in the market are eaten and seasonally available fruits are also consumed. Groundnut oil and sesamum oil are the cooking media. Pulses like chana and tur are consumed and also curd and butter milk after meals. Consumption of liquor among the poor is common. Home made sweets like *Shikkanpugi*, *Lapcha* are taken during festivals.

Theri exogamous divisions are based on *kul* (clan) such as Jadav, Kadam, Chauhan, More, Rane etc. They suffix the word Bhandari or Patel to their names. A few depending upon the occupation of their ancestors have surnames like Mehta, Karbhari, Mistry, Bhogera, Todiwala, Wadiwala, Kinyara, Jadavad and Ravat (found in Maharashtra). Though the community consider itself at par with other communities in the social hierarchy, it is placed below the Brahmans and Koli Patel, but above artisan castes like Lohar, Darji etc. and also Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes. They claim to have belonged to the Vaisya Varna.

Their avoid relatives of parents upto three or five generations in marriage alliances. Girls and boys usually get married in the age group of 16-20 and 20-25 years respectively. Mates are acquired by negotiation. Monogamy is the usual form of marriage and the permission of first wife is needed if one wants to marry a second time to beget children. *Mangalsutra* (necklace) of *Payal* (anklet) *Sindhur* (vermillion) and *Kangan* (of ivory) are the symbols of a married women. Dowry paid in cash is varying from Rs.1000/- to Rs.10,000/-. They follow patrilocal rule of residence. Divorce is allowed under exceptional cases when there is no chance of compromise between the spouses. Widow remarriage is allowed. Exchanging of garlands in the temple in presence of caste elders is the only ceremony in remarriages.

Both vertical and collateral joint families as well as nuclear families are prevelant. Joking relations are allowed between a man and his wife's younger sister or brother and between a woman and her husband's younger brother or sister. A woman is expected

to cover her head in front of her father-in-law and all the elder male relatives of her husband. Only sons have the right of inheritance of ancestral property and the eldest son succeeds to the authority in the household.

The Bhandari women enjoy almost equal status although they have no right of inheritance. Fuel and fodder is usually collected by them and they have a role in ritual and social activities. Quite a few Bhandari women earn as agricultural labourers and also invest their labour in the family fields. Proper supervision of household affairs is regarded as a primary duty of woman.

The first delivery takes place at the house of the women's parents. During seventh month of her pregnancy, her younger brother and a few other female relatives visit her and present coconuts and a sum of Rs.300/- each to her mother-in-law, sister-in-law and younger brother-in-law and about Rs.100/- to Rs.300/- to the nearest kin. This is called *Sreemanth* after which she goes to her natal home for the confinement. Delivery takes place in a hospital. Birth pollution lasts five weeks. The *fui* (father's sister) of the baby in consultation with a Brahman priest confers the name on the *chathi* or sixth day.

Any *vastra* (go-between) on behalf of the family of a prospective groom takes the initiative for a matrimonial alliance. The betrothal ceremony is performed at the bride's house. Before finalising the exact date for marriage a ceremony called *Cheranaghatta* in which the groom's party consisting of the five nearest relatives visit the bride's house and receive the dowry. Marriages are performed during Mahaphagum or Vaisakh month of the Hindu calendar. Both bride and groom are anointed with turmeric paste for three days prior to the wedding called *haldilagane*. The maternal uncle brings clothes for his nephew/niece a day before and on the day of marriage respectively and this is called *masalalana*. Lord Ganesh is worshipped. Marriage rituals are concluded with the bridal couple making the seven rounds of the sacred fire which is followed by a marriage feast. The bride goes to her husband's house where nuptial ceremony takes place.

In case of death of children, below five years, are buried facing north; otherwise the dead are cremated. Mourning is observed for eleven days. All relatives gather on eleventh day i.e. *gyarva* and perform *pinddan* and on *barmo* in which all relatives besides the

Brahmans are fed. Death rites conclude with the performance of *kriya* on the eighteenth day which in earlier times was performed after a year, the period of mourning thus preventing marriages during the period.

Land is a major source of income of the community. A majority of the Kuber Bhandari are in the possession of cultivable lands and a few from the other two groups also have small plots of land. The community belong to a land-owning category. They were in-charge of treasuries and foodgrains during the pre-independence days while many members of the community also made their livelihood by toddy taping. With prohibition in force a majority of them depend mainly on cultivators or on retail business in vegetables. A few educated Bhandari have taken to white collar jobs. They visit nearby towns and markets to meet their day-to-day requirements. Wages are paid in cash.

Both Kalghara and the Kuber Bhandari groups have a registered caste council at the regional level. It is managed by an executive committee consisting of 15 or 19 elected members. This committee is called *Bhandari Gnathi chouraji panch* and *Sri Bhandari Gnathi Mandali* respectively at Surat city and Valsad and it deals with day-to-day activities of the community. Before Independence the caste council retain village panchayat. They have local panch or headman at every place of their habitat. Usually a sum of Rs.5/- per head per year is collected towards membership. Sometimes funds/donations are collected during marriage rituals of the members of the community to help poor students by paying their fees, supplying them text books free of cost etc. The caste council also gets an income by letting out the community hall for rent during marriages of members of different communities.

Vaishnava sect of Hinduism is the religion professed by the Bhandari though they worship all the other Hindu gods and goddess of the wider pantheon like Lord Krishna, Rama, Ambamat, Gayatridevi etc. They visit the sacred shrine of Mahadev at Palana, Mahalakshmi at Dahanu, *Uaayi mata* at Unai for pilgrimage purpose. Any Brahmin priest preferrably an Audichya Bharahman is employed as a sacred specialist. Diwali, Holi, Dassehra, etc. are the major festivals celebrated in accordance with Hindu traditions.

Traditional songs regarding their origin exist. Folk songs of the region are sung by the women folk during marriage rituals.

As cultivators and keepers of ware houses and manufacturers of today, they have social and occupational relation with all the communities of their settled areas. Traditionally, they accept food and water from Brahmins and Desai (Anavil Brahmins) but the later do not do so from the Bhandaris. They do not accept and exchange food and water with Scheduled castes, Schedules tribes and other religious minorities except Mochi-Ganchi, a non vegetarian community. Very few have *dharambhai* relations with their neighbours.

The Bhandari share drinking water resources, crematorium, school, temple and panchayat house with their neighbouring communities. They used to give food grains to artisan castes like Barber, Dhobhi, Lohar and Mochi till recently and for the last ten years they have started working in the agricultural fields of Desai or Koli patel on daily wages. The participation of the Bhandari community is limited to local level politics only.

The level of literacy is moderate but gradually increasing. The girls have started reaching to secondary level of education over the last fifteen years. There are only very few doctors, advocates, engineers and clerks among them. They are making use of modern health facilities and the community has positive approach towards the family planning programme. Almost all houses have drinking water facilities and electricity. Post and telegraph facilities are within their reach as also good road and rail transportation. A majority of them avail irrigation facilities in the form of canals, river water and are using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. They are satisfied with the ration shop facilities. Quite a few have accounts in nearby banks and avail loan facilities.

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BHANGI

The Bhangi are also known as Rukhi, Mehatar and Halal-khor. According to Crooke (1896), the term is derived from the Sanskrit word 'banga' (hemp) in allusion to the drunken habits of the community. They claim that they are the descendants of a Brahman sage who carried away and buried a dog that had died in the midst of a Brahman assembly. The term Mehtar is a honoristic title which was commonly applied to the servants of Emperor Humayun. The term Halal-khor is derived from the Persian 'halal' (clean or lawful) and 'khor' (eaten) apparently because to them everything was lawful food. This euphemistic title is said to have been introduced by the Emperor Akbar. They have a wide spread distribution in various districts of the state. They speak with kin as well as with outsiders in Gujarati and use Gujarati script.

The Bhangi are non-vegetarian but do not eat beef. Wheat, *bajra* and rice are their staple food. They use all kinds of pulses and vegetables. Tea is a popular beverage and they occasionally consume milk also. They are fond of alcoholic drinks which they brew at home or purchase from the market. Smoking is common among them.

The community has social divisions based on territory. They follow community endogamy and clan exogamy. Clan members render help to one another in times of need. They claim themselves as the descendants of rishis, (saints). But in the local social hierarchy other castes considered them as the lowest.

Monogamy is the general form of marriage though polygyny is also practiced. Marriageable age for girls varies from fourteen to sixteen years while for boys it is between fifteen to twenty years and the mode of settling marriages is through negotiation. Symbols of a married woman are *Sindhur* or vermillion and bangles of lac. Bride-price is paid in cash and rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce and remarriage are permissible. A widow as a widower can marry again.

Nuclear families predominate in the society. Interpersonal relationships are congenial within the family and is based on mutual love and respect. Joking relationship exists between grand parents and grand children. Inheritance of property is always through male line, and is based on the principle of equigeniture. Succession follows male primogeniture. Inter-family linkages are cordial. Family members generally work together to built up the family economy.

A Bhangi woman is rated on an equal footing in family affairs and also in social and religious matters. But they have neither the right to inherit the property nor are they allowed to succeed to any post. Women, however, actively contribute to the family income. They have a status lower than that of their men.

Delivery occurs within the house. It takes place with the help of a local mid-wife who is also from the community. A ceremony *Chhatti Pujan* is observed on the sixth day after birth in which sweets are distributed for the well-being of the child. Birth pollution for the child is observed for twelve days while the same for the mother extends to forty days. *Mundan* ceremony or tonsure of the child is observed at an odd year of age.

Marriage is locally called *lagan*. Marriage ceremony begins with the *Sagai* or engagement. The other important rituals are *haldi* (anointing turmeric paste) and *phera* (circumambulation of sacrificial fire). A Brahmin priest fixes the date of marriage. The day before the marriage, there remains *ratjaga*, (singing through night) in which women sing songs to appease gods and goddesses seeking blessings, happiness and prosperity in the family life of the marrying couple. This singing session continues throughout the night. *Haldi* ceremony is performed on the same day in which turmeric is sent to bride's house from the groom's after the performance of the ritual there. *Jan* (wedding procession) of the bridegroom goes to the bride's house where the marriage is solemnised. The sacred fire is circumambulated four times by the bride and the groom together. Bride leaves for the groom's house alongwith the *Jan*. Consummation of marriage takes place there. She returns to her parental home after five days and finally goes later to her father-in-law's house.

The Bhangi cremate the dead. In case of death of an unmarried children and pregnant woman they practise burial. On the third

day after death they light an earthen lamp in memory of the deceased. Unburnt bones and ashes are collected and disposed off in river water. On the twelfth day, they observe final death-rites and a feast is arranged.

The traditional occupation of the Bhangi was sweeping, cleaning drains along the roads and also within residential units. There has been a large scale diversification of occupations among them. A large section serve in governmental and private agencies. Some work as labourers on a daily wage basis. Their women are also in service. The Bhangi manufacture baskets of bamboo. They also do the job of beating drums on ceremonial occasions. The minors also go for earning. Those who have received some education, have taken to white collar jobs also.

The Bhangis are bound together by a feeling of caste solidarity. They have their headman to settle their social disputes and in cases of breaches of caste rules, the offender is penalized and is generally ex-communicated for a short duration after which he is re-admitted in the society, with the payment of fine in cash. They are interested in politics, participate at the local level. The statutory panchayats look after the implementation of the developmental schemes.

The Bhangi are Hindu by religion, recognizing *Valmiki muni* as the patron God of their community. They also worship Chamunda, Ambamata and lord Hanuman. Many of the Bhangis are followers of the saints like Kabir, Ramananda and Nanak. They observe Holi, Dasserah and Diwali and other Hindu festivals. They have *bhuva* or magico — religious specialists. They participate in all the major festivals of the state. They also worship *Kakabalia* when afflicted with the pox.

The Bhangi are traditionally a low-graded group. Traditionally (clean) castes do not accept food and water from them. However in the urban the strictness has been relaxed. They have the access to civic amenities and entry to public buildings and institutions. They have their own drinking water wells. They however accept any type of food from other communities.

Among those who live in cities, attitude towards education is favourable. They encourage their boys and girls to go to schools for education. The Bhangi have a positive attitude towards the development programmes sponsored by government, such as family

welfare, medical and health care. Some of them have been benefitted by these programmes such as availing of electricity connections, road facilities and tube wells for the supply of water. Banks and fair price shops are within their reach. They purchase necessary items from ration shop. Kerosene oil, cowdung cake are the fuels used by them.

N.K. Ghatak

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BHANUSALI

The name Bhanusali or Bhansari is said to be derived from a mythical king Bhanusal meaning *bhanu* or Sun and 'sali' meaning worshippers, i.e. worshippers of the Sun god. The Bhanusali community was also called Vegusor/Vagars after the place Vegukot or Vegugad in the Rann of Kutch which was exclusively inhabited by the community. Punjab is believed to be their original home from where they migrated to Sindh and Kutch in search of a livelihood. They are found principally in Bombay, and in the villages of Abdasa, Mandvi, Bhuj and Nakhatrana talukas of Kutch district. Kachchi is the mother-tongue of the community. A few among them speak Gujarati and use Guajrati script.

The Bhanusali community is vegetarian in its diet. Bajra, wheat are the common cereals. Onion, potato brinjal, ladies finger and tomato are commonly consumed. Groundnut oil is used as a cooking medium. *Tur*, *moong* are common pulses they take. Sweet dishes like *beda*, *kheer* or *kansar* prepared out of milk are eaten during festivals.

The community is divided broadly into two sections on the basis of territory i.e. Kutchchi and Sindhi Bhanusalis. The latter is considered lower in status because of its non-vegetarian food habits and so inter group marriages are avoided as far as possible. The Kutchchi Bhanusali community has a number of clans of equal status on the basis of occupation, territory or after the names of their ancestors. Enthoven (1920) has discussed about 96 exogamous sections. Mangay, Vadore, Gazara, Gor, Bhadra, Nanda, Harbala are some of their clan names. Their main function is to regulate marriages. All males members suffix the name of the community to their names. Although the community considered itself at par with Brahmans, other communities rank them below Brahman, Patidar and Ahir in the local social hierarchy.

Clan exogamy and as far as possible marrying a girl within the mother's clan is also avoided. The preferred age at marriage is 18-25 years for both girls and boys. Marriages are arranged though

negotiation. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. A gold chain and *sindur* (vermilion) are the symbols of a married woman. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriage. Divorce is not permitted by the community. Widow remarriage is prohibited, but a widower is allowed to remarry after three months of his first wife's death. Community marriages are becoming popular which facilitate to cut down the expenditure.

Nuclear families are predominant. A few joint families are also reported. A woman is supposed to observe *andher* i.e. (avoidance) in front of her father-in-law and all the male relatives who are elder to her husband. Father's sister, father's brother's wife and mother's brother's wife are always invited in rituals and are honoured with suitable gifts. Father's brother is required to take care of his niece and nephew on the death of his brother. All the sons have equal right of inheritance in ancestral property. Succession is through the male line.

Women enjoys equal status. She takes part in the rituals and religious activities. She contributes to the family's income by working as an agricultural labourer within the village besides attending to domestic activities and collecting fuel and fodder.

The mother after child birth is considered impure for a minimum period of five weeks or forty days. The child is given its name by the father's sister within a month of birth. *Giraya* (the first feeding of solid food) to the child is observed after the completion of five months. In case of a male child, *Janayu* (thread wearing) ceremony is performed either when he is 12 or 13 years of age or at the time of his marriage.

Matrimonial alliances are settled through a person known to both the parties. A formal betrothal ceremony is performed by presenting two pairs of clothes, some sweets and items like *Sindur* (vermilion box), comb etc. to the bride. On an average the expenditure amounts to about Rs. 5000/- *Vaisakh* (sacred month according to Hindu calendar) is preferred and marriage is solemnised within one year of the betrothal. All rituals *grihashanti* (worshipping of Lord Vighneshwar), *mandoparopan* (erection of marriage booth) are performed a day before actual marriage, and are concluded by the circumambulation (rounds) of the sacred fire for four times. Sponge tree is worshipped by the couples on their way to the groom's house where nuptial ceremony takes

place on the same day. The bride is sent to her parents and brought back to in-laws permanently after she has spent two or three days with her parents.

The dead are cremated except children below 8 years of age. All the patrilineal male relatives shave their head and moustache. On the tenth day *pinddan* is observed in which the ashes of the dead are immersed in a near by stream. On the eleventh day 'baras' a feast is arranged in which only those younger to the deceased take part. *Ghadadena* on thirteenth day is also performed. *Chamchar* (anniversary) is performed atleast after a year when they pay homage by performing *barasi* (anniversary).

Land is the major economic resource and is controlled by individuals. Agriculture followed by petty business was their traditional occupation. A few are also agricultural labourers or engaged in petty business like running kirana (provision stores), tea stalls and vegetable shops. They also rear cattle. Wages are paid in cash.

There is a Bhanusali samaj or caste council at the village, local, regional and national level. It has an elected body at all the levels. The head of the regional caste council is known as the *Patel* and of all India level called the *Pramukh*. Besides the community council, a village council by the name *Samadhan Niyojan Panch* also exists. It consists of a member each from different communities of the village. This council settles disputes relating to agriculture and inter-caste disputes in the village. It has been replaced by Statutory Gram Panchayat.

Hinduism is the religion professed by the community. The chief deity of the community is Hinglaji mata at Nalia village of Abdasa taluka who is worshipped on Chitra subhanavami. A majority of them used to worship this deity near Karachi in Sindh, Pakistan but now very few go on a pilgrimage there. Locally they worship Ashapuramata whose shrine exists at Khradia village 12 km. from Nakhatrana. They also worship Shapuramata at a village Matanomed in Lakhpatt taluka. Each clan has its own deity. For instance, Kadore clan worship Momaimata at Bhuj proper. The Gazra clan worships Ashapuramata at Kharadia village of Nakhatra nataluka. The Mangay clan worship Khetarpad, the Nanda clan worship Jasraj whose blessings are sought at the time of marriage at Nothada village in Abdasa taluka. The Bhanusalis belonging to

the Gazra clan worship Mahadevji. Meghji Bhanusali is their priest who performs puja at Kheradia village during Navratri and his blessings are sought on important family festivals at the village. They visit Koteswar and Dwarka as and when they get a chance. They celebrate Navratri, Holi, Diwali, Akhateej, Gokul Ashtami and Shiram Navami.

This community has ritual and social linkages with other communities such as Brahman, Ahir or Ayar, Thakkaray (Rajput) Thakkar (Lohana), Rebari, Patel or Patidar, Bhatiya, Bawaji, Darbar (Jadesj) Charan Gadvi, Bharwad, Soni, Kansera, Paradhi, Lohar, Darjee, Jain and Vania. Traditionally. They accept water and cooked food from the Jain, Rajput, Patel, Rebari, Bharwad, Charan and Gadvi who are lower than them in status. However, they do not accept/exchange water or food with Darji, Lohana, Harijans, Wadha and Koli communities, but the latter accept. Putative kinship exists with the Brahman communities. They share, wells, temple, houses and gram panchayat offices with others. They have landowner tenant relationship with Ahirs and Patidars. They take part in political activities and public functions at the local, taluka and district level. The community has representation in politics at local and taluka levels.

There are professionals like doctors and teachers besides there are quite a few graduates in the community. They avail of modern medical care and have a fairly favourable attitude towards family planning. They make use of modern communication, media, mid-day meal ration shop facilities etc. Most of them have electricity in their houses and quite a few have irrigation facilities fitted with electric motors. They use chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Quite a few utilize banking facilities for saving.

Bhanusali Seva Samaj, a Bombay based registered voluntary organisation has started Achatrahak (scarcity relief) programmes exclusively for its community members by providing loans and subsidy towards purchasing fodder for cattle and buffaloes or to start petty business. Applicants are selected on the basis of recommendation of local or regional caste councils of the community.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

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BHARTHARI/BARTHARI

The Bharthari also call themselves Sarangi Bhartharis. Enthoven 1920 discusses that they are sometimes called Naths. In tracing their origin they consider Guru Goraknath of Nath sect as their religious preceptor. They play their *sarangi* (fiddle) while begging alms moving from one house to other. They worship their *sarangi* which is known as *ravanhatha* or *ravan hathho* considered to have originally been made by mythological "Ravana" (of the Ramayana) during his meditation to please Lord Shiva. Their men always carry it with them. They are distributed in most of the parts of the State specially in the districts of Sabarkanta, Banaskanta, Mehsana, Panchmahal etc.

The Bharthari are strictly vegetarian. Their staple food includes cereals like wheat, rice, maize, jawar etc. with various kinds of vegetables and pulses. Among the pulses they do not take *masur*. Onion and garlic also they do not take as they consider themselves as *sadhus*. Generally they do not drink alcohol. They can not provide milk to their children. They take fruits very rarely.

The community is an endogamous unit with exogamous units called *atak*; some of the common *ataks* are Dogra, Mujhraba, Bhati, Chauhan, Yadav, Hirni, Taradar, Churdi, Khant, Bagela, Solanki, Rana, Monwana etc. In the local socio-ritual hierarchy they enjoy a status equal to that of Kumbhar, Suthar, Luhar, Darji but higher than the Od, Salat, Waghri etc.

Monogamy is the common form of marriage. Polygyny is permitted but it needs prior permission of the community *panch*. The community members arrange the marriage of their sons and daughters around the ages of 20 and 18 years respectively. Marriage by negotiation is the prevalent mode of acquiring mates. As symbols of marriage, married women wear bangles and put *sindhur* (vermillion) on their forehead, Bride price is paid in cash (minimum Rs.232/-) In marriage gifts domestic items like utensils, etc. are given by the girl's father in marriage. They have patrilocal rule of residence. Divorce is allowed in the society. A divorced

woman can remarry. She may marry her deceased husband's brother. Remarriage (*natra*) for the widow, widower and a male divorcee are permitted. Both husband and wife may seek divorce. Divorce takes place mainly due to adultery and male adjustment etc. If the wife found to be offender then the bride price is to be paid back.

Both nuclear as well as joint family types are common. The daughter-in-law and son-in-law have the avoidance relations with the father-in-laws and mother-in-laws respectively. One has obligatory relations to one's maternal uncle or one's father's sister. A married woman avoids her husband's elder brother and such kins and keep veil. Joking relations exist between grand parents and grand children. A woman has a joking relations with her husband's younger brothers and sisters and a man with his wife's younger sister. Succession is through the eldest son. Ancestral property is inherited and shared equally by sons. Inter-family linkages are strong as they are based on fellow feeling and community sentiment.

The Bharthari women do not have any right to inherit property. They do the household work, prepare fodder for cattle, collect fuel for cooking etc. Sometimes they beg from door to door or they do the work of the day-labourers and contribute to the family income. They are not decision makers in any family affairs. They take part in social and religious functions. In general their status is inferior in comparison to that of their men.

In case of first pregnancy the pregnant woman is taken to her father's house for confinement. The mother observes pollution for forty days. On the sixth day after birth naming ceremony for the new born is performed. They worship their *kuldevi* (family deity). The child's father's sister selects the name and she first calls the baby by that name. They perform a ritual called *gurubanana* or initiation to the sect after some years. *Sidha* is offered to *guru*. A community feast is arranged.

Negotiation for marriage is given ritual confirmation through the girl *sagai* (betrothal). It is generally held around the ages of ten and twelve years for the girl and the boy respectively. The ceremony is held in both the houses. The bride's parents fix the day and time of *lagan* in consultation with the Brahman (Gour Brahman) and inform the groom's parents. A day earlier than the

marriage they take out a procession called *varghoda* in the village. They perform rituals like *pithi*, (anointing turmeric part to bride and groom) *Ganesh sthapana* (installation of lord Ganesh) etc. The groom with his party i.e. *barat* reaches the house of the girl where the marriage is solemnised. The girl's mother receives the *barat*. The marriage ceremony is officiated by the Gaur Brahmin. The rituals include *havan*, *hasta milap*, four *phera* and *kanyadan*. The next day the groom takes the bride to his parental home. The marriage feast is arranged for the community members and consummation takes place at groom's house.

The Bharthari bury their dead. The dead body is covered with a new cloth and then, they carry it on a bamboo bier for burial. On the way they take rest under a tree or at the junction of roads. They call it *vishama*. The body is lowered in the grave and covered it with a thick layer of sets and then by earth. The eldest son acts as the chief mourner. They observe thirteen days pollution. On the second day they keep a pitch full of water at the burial place and offer flowers. On the fifth or the seventh day the sons and near male relatives have head hair shaved and then take purificatory bath. They arrange the *shraddh* ceremony on the eleventh or the twelfth day. On the thirteenth day they arrange *Puran katha*. The funeral feast is arranged.

The Bharthari are very poor and mainly subsist on begging. A few of them possess small cultivable land. Most of them do not have land even to construct their huts. A majority of them are engaged as labourers on daily wage basis. Very few are employed in Government or private organisations in menial services. Women and minors also go for earning.

The community *panch* at the village level is constituted by community elders. Their *bara Panch* is constituted by one or two members from each village or local *panch*. The community *panch* settle the disputes regarding divorce, remarriage, *sagai* etc. The *panch* imposes punishment in the form of a cash fine and may even ex-communicate offender. For any criminal case they approach the law courts. The statutory gram panchayat looks after developmental programmes.

The Bharthari are Hindu by religion and observe most of the Hindu festivals. They visit the Hindu pilgrimage centres, like Somnath, Dwaraka etc. They belong to the Nath sect and consider

lord Shiva or Shankar Bhagawan as their community god. They have their *kuladevis* whom they worship in their life-cycle rituals and during Dasera. Sadhimata, Kalaraimata, Meraí Davi, Meldi mata, Kalkadevi, Kangdimata are some of their *kuladevis*. They make offerings to other gods and goddesses of wider Hindu pantheon. They observe Dasera, Diwali, Holi, *Gokul Astami* etc. and attend the local Hindu fairs, like Ramdevji *mela*, Somnath *mela* in Shrabna and Ambaji *mela*. They attend the fairs for begging.

The Bharthari sing folk songs and devotional songs while begging. They themselves make their *Sarangi* (fiddle).

In their life cycle rituals, Rawal or Waghris beat the drum. Gour Brahman and Nai also serve them. They beg in the houses of thirteen different castes only (*tera tansli*) which includes Kumbhar, Gaija (Hajam), Suthar, Luhar, Chowdhury, Rabari, Bharwad, Rajput, etc. This is a clean caste cluster. They accept food and water from these castes. They share school, crematorium, water resources etc with other communities.

Literacy and education level is quite low among these people. Now they are sending their children to school. They have a positive attitude towards family planning programmes. Some of them possess radio also. They use fire wood and cow dung cake as fuel. They avail of the other facilities like nutritional programme, public distribution system of ration etc. Banking facilities are available but it is hardly of any use to them.

D.K. Nanda

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BHARWAD

The term Bharwad is reported to be a modified form of the word 'Badawad' and 'bada' means sheep and 'wada' in Gujarati refers to compound or enclosure. The person who possess compounds or pens in this caste of shepherds were known as Badawad which in course of time came to be known as Gadarias. In south Gujarat they are referred to as Ahirs. The Gazetteers of Amreli (1973) states that Bharwad is caste of shepherds. The Bharwad in Saurashtra is divided into two endogamous groups viz. Mota Bhai and Nana Bhai. There are various versions of the origin of the Bharwads. According to one version stated by Enthoven (1920) which is corroborated by the origin myths of the community, is that Gokul Vrindavan near Mathura was their original home. They then migrated to Mewar in Rajasthan and finally to Gujarat where they are spread out. Another version states that the Bharwad originated from Bharude, a community of cattle herders in Madhya Pradesh. They might be a section of the Ahirs of Gujarat since the occupation of Ahirs is also cattle breeding. According to another account, during the eighteenth century, a tribal leader, Anavil Bharuvad, helped a King Vanraj Chavda to recapture the kingdom which Chavada's father had lost to an enemy. The people who call themselves as Bharwads are descendants of Anavil Bharwads and his associates. They are mainly distributed in Junagadh, Rajkot, Surendranagar and Bhavnagar districts. They are also found in other parts of the state. Enthoven (1920) writes that Bharwads numbered 95,832 according to 1901 census. The population of Bharwads (1961 census) in Alech, Barda and Gir forests of Junagadh and a part of Jamnagar district was 59 and 531 respectively. They are being forcibly evicted from 'neses' (settlement) of Gir forest and being rehabilitated in some of the villages of Junagadh district by the forest department. They communicate in Gujarati. They use Gujarati script. The women wear *kaachuru* and *bandi* as the upper and lower garments respectively. Men usually wear an ear ring made of silver called *Variyo*. The length

of turbans differs among the two divisions of Bharwads. In Alech, Barda and Gir forests they are listed as Scheduled tribes.

The Bharwads are vegetarian, The Gazetteer of India - Amreli district (1972) states that Bharwads are non-vegetarian. *Jawar*, *bajra* are the common cereals they take. Occasionally wheat they take and rice. Pulses like *tur* (pigeon pea) and grams are consumed. The cooking medium is groundnut oil or palmolein oil. They consume available vegetables and fruits. During festivals they eat home made sweets like *Ladu*, *Bundi*, *lapsi* etc. The only change is the gradual switching over to a vegetarian diet under the impact of various socio-religious movements.

The Bharwads of south Gujarat are considered to be lower in social status to Saurashtra Bharwads and they only give their daughters in marriage to the latter. The two endogamous divisions viz. Motabhai and Nanabhai of Saurashtra intermix freely. The origin of these two divisions is traced to a myth, Goverdhan Giri was worshipped by the mota Bharwad so that the community could get abundant pastures.

Each division has a number of *atak* or *kul* (clan) among Motabhai Bharwads. Some of them among the motabhai Bharwad are Rathadia, Jadav, Yadav, Matia, Sania, Bathela, Gomara, Kathodi, Mundhva, Dharangia, Colthar, Pancha, Dabi, Garia, Sasda, Babha, Lambaris, Dhangia, Ker, Tota, etc. Amongst the south Gujarat Bharwads, some of the clans are Chanduka, Rokadka, Kalwamia, Jodika, Gundayra, Kuhadiya, Khohadya, Dhahika. The first three clans amongst Motabhai claim higher status and inter marry among themselves. The chief function of clans is to regulate mate selection. Those of Saurashtra tend to suffix the term Ahir or the clan name while those of south Gujarat suffix Patel to their name. They consider themselves at par with the castes like Rajput, Lohana, Vania. Others rank them after Brahman, Vania. Lohana, Patel, Charan and Darjee in the local social hierarchy. They claim that they are ranked above artisan communities like Suthar (carpenter) Lohar (blacksmith), Kumhar and far above Vaghri, Bhangi, Chamar, Dubla and Naika and the Bharwads say that they belong to Vaisya Varna.

Clan exogamy is the norm. The preferred age of marriage is 18 to 20 years for girls and 20 to 22 years for boys. Marriages are settled through negotiation. Community marriages do take place

occasionally amongst them to reduce expenditure on rituals. They practice monogamy. In case of barrenness, the consent of first wife is to be obtained by the husband to remarry. The symbols of a married woman are *balliya* (ivory bangles), vermillion in the hair parting and *mangal sutra* (necklace). Bride price is paid in cash. The groom's family is expected to give one-and-a-half tolas of gold and forty tolas of silver ornaments to the bride. Post marital residence is patrilocal. *Chuttedha* (divorce) is generally discouraged though permitted, on grounds of madness, maladjustment, barrenness or impotency of spouse. *Ghargenu* (remarriage) is permitted in case of death of either spouse. The deceased wife's younger unmarried sister is preferred as mates. It only requires the declaration before the 'Nyath panchayat'. In south Gujarat, a widow wears a red skirt. Dowry is emerging amongst the Bharwads of south Gujarat.

Nuclear families are most prevalent. Avoidance relationships exist between a woman and her father-in-law and between her and the elder brother of her husband. Joking relationships exist between a woman and her husband's younger brother and between a man and his wife's younger sister. Male equignature is the rule of inheritance. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the household. In the absence of a son in a family, brother's son or sister's son-in-law becomes the legal heir. Paternal and maternal uncles are close who help in times of social and economic crisis and also in the ritual spheres.

Bharwad women have no right of property inheritance. Although her advice is sought concerning the family, the final decision rests with the husband. Besides household chores, taking care of the herds and flocks and collecting fuel and fodder, a woman contributes to family income by working as agricultural labourers. On the whole the Bharwad women enjoy low status.

The delivery takes place at her husband's house. Local midwife assists in the delivery which takes place within the house. The mother's is given *bajra roti* and *ghee* (clarified butter). The child is fed with goat milk till it gets mother's milk. On the sixth day, *Chatti* is performed in which a name is given to the child by the father's sister. The mother is considered to be impure for a period of five weeks. *Annaprasan* (first feeding of solid) to the child is done when he/she is six months old. A male child after attaining

the age of two, undergoes the tonsure ceremony which is called *ball muhara*.

The Sagai (engagement) is fixed when a girl is one or two years old, and when boys are between two to three years of age. Gifts are given to the bride at festivals. The wedding ceremony takes place in the month of *Vaisakh*. The ceremony begins by sending a *lagan patrika* or wedding invitation to the father of the groom. A day before actual wedding *mandoparopan* (erection of wedding booth) is done. The bride and groom are smeared with turmeric paste. The principle ritual take place at the bride's house. After the arrival of the *barat* (groom's party) a Brahmin priest performs rituals. The bride and groom circumambulating the sacred fire for four times followed by a feast. The bride is taken to the groom's house where the nuptial ceremony takes place. She returns after a few days and finally goes to her husband's house after Diwali.

In case of death of children below twelve years of age they are buried. Otherwise the dead are cremated. The corpse is bathed in warm water and then placed on a bamboo bier and carried to the cremation ground. After the final rites the mourners bathe before returning home. Till the performance of *vidhi*, the family members avoid wearing new clothes and celebrating festivals. The *vidhi* is performed on tenth day if the deceased was below the age of 25 otherwise on the twelfth day. The male relatives undergo tonsures and in the evening a feast is arranged. Everyone leaves some amount as gift called *vyavahar* in order to share the financial burdern of the person who performs this ritual on the Rishi Panchami day (August). The Brahman is given clothes and money for the services rendered.

The Bharwads are pastorals who are permitted to graze their sheep and cattle in certain demarcated areas of the reserved forest. Some Bharwads possess dry agricultural land under the Satharnal scheme (1968). Besides the traditional means of subsistence such as grazing livestock, they earn their livelihood as agricultural labourers. Although economic transaction takes place through the cash medium, yet Bharwads prefer to barter seven to nine goats for a cow within themselves. Children work as 'Govan' (shepherd boy) or as agricultural labourers.

The Bharwads have *nyath panchayats* (caste council) to settle quarrels, illicit relations, forcible abduction of girls and demanding

dowries and so on. The '*nyat panchayat*' consists of a Patel (chief) and three to four other members. The members represent a village or a group of villages. The jurisdiction of each of these panchayats depends on the concentration of Bharwads in the villages and vary from fifteen to fifty two villages. If the decision of the local or regional panchayat is not acceptable, then the aggrieved person approaches the main council located at Rajkot. The Patel of Rajkot is assisted by all regional Patels of panchayat of Bharwads. It is only when a decision at this level fails to resolve the problem satisfactorily that Bharwads take recourse to the law enforcing agencies and the courts but according to the Bharwads themselves this happens only rarely. Persons found guilty are punished through cash fines and before levying which the caste council consider the economic position of the offender. The amount collected in this way is spent on the general welfare of the community. The importance of the *nyat panchayat* has not declined even after the establishment of modern panchayats.

The Bharwads profess Hinduism. Lord Krishna is considered the supreme God. Each clan has its own deity whose blessings are sought by newly wed couples. Their chief deity is Masai Mata. Worship of the deity is particularly common in those few villages inhabited by a considerable number of Bharwads. At the regional level they have temple of Masai Mata worshipped by rural Bharwads. The most important sacred centre is located at Morvi in Rajkot district. Desara, Diwali, Janamashtami and Holi are the festivals celebrated. During Navratri, the Bharwads observe fast. Some Bharwads also celebrate two local festivals which fall during the month of *Ashad* (*Beiso*) and *Magha* (*Beiso*) in which forecast regarding prospects of crops and rainfall are made respectively. The Bharwads go on pilgrimage to Dwaraka, Virpur and other sacred centres. They have a *bhuva* or *bhagat* in their community for worshipping clan deities and the Anavil Brahman performs marriage and death rites. Some Bharwads of south Gujarat have become vegetarian owing to influence of socio-religious movements under the leadership some of them have become the followers of Pandurang Shastry of Bombay, Akham Anand of Valsad and Poppattal Maharaj of Junagadh.

They have folk songs sung at weddings. Some of them weave cloth out of wool of sheep and goats, which they use for covering

themselves or as mattress. The Gazetteer of India-Amreli district states that a few Bharwads weave and sell blankets.

Being pastoralist they interact with a vast array of neighboring communities but for ritual purposes they keep to themselves. They do not accept or exchange food with Bhangi, Mochi, Chamar and Vaghri; however, they do so with the Lohars, Koli, Bania, Patel etc. The Bharwads share facilities of road, drinking water, school, crematorium, temples and places of worship and offices of statutory councils with the neighbouring communities. At the political level their participation is confined to local level.

Literacy has not made satisfactory progress within the community. Very few professionals are found in the community as most of them do not continue beyond the primary level. The Bharwads make moderate use of modern medical facilities. Their attitude towards family planning is positive and their women get sterilised after two or three children. The sources of drinking water are through taps and handpumps. Most of the houses have electricity connections. The villages studied are all well connected by modern roads and the Bharwads go to distant places of 160 Kms to contract marital alliances, or to meet relatives, or on pilgrimages. Post and telegraph facilities are found near their dwelling place but few Bharwads have radios, and very few possess TV sets. Only a few avail of the cinema for entertainment. Bharwads in south and central Gujarat have irrigation wells and use insecticides in their agricultural operations. School going children benefit from mid-day meals scheme in their schools. Very few take credit from local shopkeeper or money lender.

Owing to the sincere efforts of Shri Surabhai Bharwad, the Gujarat Rajya Gopalak Sahakari Sangh Ltd, was established in the year 1950 at Ahmedabad to undertake various welfare projects for the Bharwads. It has established 537 co-operative societies in Surendranagar, Rajkot and Bhavnagar districts where considerable number of Bharwads live. This also tries to remove social evils like bride price. The co-operative has published nine volumes (in Gujarati), explaining the historical origin, distribution, socio-cultural and religious activities of them.

Md. Azeez Mohiddeen

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BHATIA

The Bhatia are a well known trading community found all over India. According to their mythological origin, lord Krishna is believed to be the *mul purush* (earliest ancestor). According to Enthoven (1920) they claim their origin from Bhatti Rajputs a ruling lineage of Jaisalmer of Rajasthan belonging to the *Chandra Vanshi* line. The entire community was known as a warrior class. But due to frequent droughts and lack of amenities for agriculture, a few families switched over to trade, business for their livelihood while the major section continued with martial traditions. Bhatti Rajputs stopped exchanging daughters in marriage with them. As a result, accompanied by a Pushkarna Brahman this group migrated to Nagar Tattah of Sindh and settled there from where they spread all over Punjab, Rajasthan, Kutch and other parts of Gujarat. On a territorial basis, the Bhatias have the following groups; Kutchchi Bhatia, Sindhi Bhatia, Punjabi Bhatia, Halai or Kanthi Bhatia, Naugam Bhatia and Vizpuri Bhatia. The above groups are endogamous. The Kutchchi Bhatia opine that they are one of the earliest inhabitants of Kutch. They are distributed in Bhuj, Anjar, Mundra, Mandi. Most Bhatia are conversant in Gujarati but speak the Kutchhi dialect amongst themselves as well as with others of the region. Gujarati script is used. A few speak Hindi also.

The Bhatia community is vegetarian. Wheat and Bajri are their staple cereal. They take available vegetables. Butter milk and milk is taken after lunch and supper respectively. Pulses such as *tur*, *moong*, *masur*, are consumed and groundnut oil is used as the cooking medium. Home made sweets like *payda*, *barfi*, *gulabjamo*, *chivada* are eaten on festive occasions. Fruits, milk and sweets are also eaten while observing fast on Janmasthan festival. Many of them consume onions and garlic and a few who have travelled abroad are now taking non-vegetarian food as well.

Each territorial group among the Bhatia has a number of clans. Kutchchi Bhatia have clans like Ashar, Jasrani, Negandhi, Vade, Khetani, Fsmayya, Thakkar, Sayayyo, etc. The clans are named

after distant ancestors and indicate descent. All clans are exogamous in nature and enjoy equal status. They consider themselves as off-shoots of Kshatriya and treat Lohana at par with them. They regard themselves as belonging to the *Kasyap gotra*.

Clan exogamy and territorial group endogamy governs the rules of marriage. The age of marriage has now increased to 20-22 and 25 in case of girls and boys respectively. Marriages are arranged through negotiation. The Arya Samaj is also trying to popularize simplified form of marriage involving minimum expenditure. The Bhatias are strictly monogamous. Wearing of mangalsutra (necklace) and anklet are considered symbols of a married woman. Bride-price in the form of ornaments are given to the bride by her father-in-law. Divorce is not allowed. Widow marriage is permissible in case of young widows. Elaborate rituals are not performed in such marriages.

Nuclear families followed by a few-vertically extended families prevail among them. Avoidance which used to be observed strictly between the woman and her father-in-law and elder brother of her husband is in the process of gradual decline. Joking relations are permitted between a man and the younger sister of his wife as well as with elder brother's wife and between a woman and her husband's younger sisters. Only males inherit property and succession is through eldest son. Inter-personal and family linkages are very cordial.

Although a Bhatia woman has no right of inheritance, usually she is given a share in her father's property. She plays significant role in the religious activities. Women do not engage in hard-labour. She attends to household chores. Her advice is sought and followed in many a familial matter. Their women contribute to the family income by taking up service in the government and private sectors. On the whole, she has lower status.

During the fifth month of their daughter's first pregnancy, parents of the girl perform *sriphal* ceremony by presenting coconut, some sweets and fruits. Then her parents take her to their house and arrange for the delivery either at the house itself or in a hospital. *Chatti* (name giving ceremony) is performed on sixth day in which the mother is given head bath and child is given name by its *fui* (father's sister). She is treated as impure for a period of

twentyone to forty three days. During fifth month, *Annaprasan* (first feeding of social food) is done by giving a rice and milk paste to the child. The *mundan* (tonsure) of male child is done at the shrine of the clan deity. Yagnopavith (sacred thread wearing ceremony) is performed by Brahman priest when male child becomes seven years old.

Marriage alliances are initiated by either boy's or girl's parents. If both the parties agree, then *sagpan* (betrothal ceremony) is performed in which groom's relatives including a few ladies come and present some ornaments, clothes, soem sweets and fruits. The marriage is usually solemnized within one year. Various ceremonies used to be observed in the past and a wedding therefore lasted from three to seven days. Now it has been reduced to 4 to 6 hours duration. Marriages are preferrably performed in *Kartick*, *Mag*, *Pose*, *Chaitra* and *Vaisakh* months at the bride's hosue. Rituals such as worship of lord Ganesh, *haldiagana* (application of turmeric) and *mandaparopan* (erection of marriage booth) are observed a day before the marriage. Four *phera* (rounds, of which first three rounds led by bride and last round by groom) around sacred fire are observed. They feed each other with sweet meats and perform the *Saptapadi* ceremony in which duties and obligations towards the spouse are taught. A feast is arranged. The groom returns the next day and after three to four days the bride is sent to her-in-law's house.

The dead are cremated except children who are less than five years old. The participation of husband in his wife's funeral ceremony debars him from remarrying *Dasma*, *gyarma* and *terma* are performed on tenth, eleventh and thirteenth day during which Brahman priests are fed. This is called *bhojari*. *Ghodabharna* ceremony on twelfth day is performed by leaving a water filled earthen pot in sea, river or well. Depending upon the circumstances *masik*, *teen*, *chase*, *nauand* and *barmasie* after one, three, six and twelve months are performed. Marriage in the deceased's house are not performed till *barmasee* (anniversary) is over.

Traditionally they are traders which is also the primary occupation of the Bhatia till date. Most of the Bhatias have no land and the few who are in possession of agricultural land get it cultivated by daily or monthly wage farm workers. Thus the community is mainly a landless one. Petty-business of *kirana*

(fancy and provision store), cloth, gold hotel are the present occupations of the community. Lending money on interest was the traditional occupation which was given up about 40 to 50 years ago. Business is considered the primary and service as secondary source of income of the community. Quite a few of them have migrated to Zanzibar and Gulf countries and also to Bombay during the famine in 1813 A.D. All the economic activities are measured in terms of cash. Most of the Bhatias became rich by dealing in slave trade in African countries which they have gave up as a result of freedom movements in those countries.

The caste council called Bhatia Mitra Mandal are there at Mandvi, Mundra and Anjar in Kutch district. The executive members are selected. It operates in a spirit of welfare and not for social control and is like modern community Associations. New members are selected on resigning or incapability of old members. A committee is usually consisting of one President, Secretary and seven or nine Members. The caste council has no power of awarding punishment or reward. The caste council runs *wadi* (community hall) and get income by letting it out on rent. However the community members get some concession. It spends the amount on general welfare of the community. Except for official dealings the modern statutory councils have no role in the mechanism of social control of the Bhatia.

The Bhatia's belong to the Vaishnav sect of Hindu religion. Thakorji is the chief god the community. Every house has the silver or brass idol of Thakorji. Different clans have different deities who are worshipped in rituals and festivals. They employ a Brahmin - priest for performing religious and life - cycle rituals. They visit Srinathji, Gokul Mathura, Vridavan and also Rameshwaram, Badrinath, Jagannath Puri and Dwaraka on pilgrimages. The festivals like Dassera, Deewali, Holi and specially Janmasthanmi (Lord Krishna's birthday) are celebrated as per tradition. Most of the members observe fast on Janmasthanmi. There are a few musicians and artists in the Bhatia community.

As a mercantile community, they have occupational links with all its surrounding communities. Except scheduled castes, Koli and Muslims they accept water and food from other communities. A few inter-community marriages have been reported from the Kuchchi Bhatia community. They share wells and other water

resources and facilities such as roads, schools, cremation grounds, entry to temples and panchayat ghar etc. with all the communities of the area. The participation of the community in politics and public functions confined to the local level only. The few who are in possession of agricultural land get the land cultivated by paying wages on daily or monthly basis. They as a whole are regarded as hard working, and prosperous community.

The level of literacy is considerably high among them in comparison to other communities of Kutch. There are a few graduate, teachers, under-graduate teachers, doctors, lawyers and engineers in the community. They are making optimum use of modern medical care and has very positive attitude towards family planning programme. They make full use of available transport, media and communication facilities, mid-day meal by the school going children and facilities of ration shops and banking.

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BHAVSAR

The Bhavsar are also known as Chippa or Chhapgar. Their tradition says that during Parshuram's campaign against the Kshatriyas their ancestors took shelter in the temple of goddess Hinglaj Mata and since then they have been known as Bhavsar, meaning those who placed their trust in the Goddess. They recall their migration from Brij i.e. Mathura from where they moved to Marwar and later to Gujarat. According to the other tradition they migrated from Sindh and trace their descent from the two Rajputs called Bhav singh and Shar singh giving them the name Bhavsar. At present they are distributed in the districts of Mehsana, Panchmahal, Banaskanta, Ahmedabad and Surendranagar. They speak in Gujarati among themselves as well as with outsiders. They use Gujarati script. Some are also conversant with Hindi.

The Bhavsar are strictly vegetarian in their food habits. Their staple food is millets like *jowar*, *bajra*, wheat and rice. They use ground-nut oil as their cooking medium. Alcohol is strictly prohibited. They take available vegetables and fruits. Milk and milk products are also taken. Tea is the common beverage. They supplement their diet with pulses like *tur*, *moong*.

The community has two linguistic divisions, Gujarati and Marathi which are endogamous in nature. Gujarati Bhavsars have three sub-divisions-Rewa Kanthias distributed along the bank of Mahi and the Narmada rivers, Rambeshis found in Pali and Partapgad and Talabdas concentrated in north Gujarat. They have neither commensal nor connubial relation with each other. Again the Gujarati Bhavsar have territorial subdivisions like Paten, Vadnagar, Kheda Nadiad, Sheri Bhavasar, and Twelve-villages groups. The members of these divisions inter-dine but do not inter-marry. Bharadwaj, Parbribiz, Chokhrdia, Parmar etc. are the different clans found among them. These clans are exogamous. In the local social hierarchy they stand on a par with Vania/Bania cluster.

They practice endogamy at the community, subgroup and

territorial levels but exogamy at clan level. Monogamy is the prevalent practice, polygyny is also permissible. Child marriage was the traditional custom but presently post - puberty marriage is the norm. Negotiated marriages are the common practice. Marriage by exchange, i.e., a brother and sister given in marriage to the same family is another prevalent practice. These days community marriages (collective marriage of several couples at a common place arranged by caste association) are arranged to minimise the marriage expenses. Vermilion mark on parting of hair and bangles are the symbols of a married woman. Bride-price is the traditional form and a fixed amount is paid. The constitution of dowry is a recent tradition and is paid in the form of a gift. The rule of residence is patrilocal. Divorce is permitted but it needs the approval of caste panchayat. Remarriage or *natra* is allowed. *Devarvata* (Junior levirate) is also practised. A widower and divorcee can marry again.

Extended type families are the common pattern. A woman observes avoidance relationship with her father-in-law and with her husband's elder brother but joking relationships exist between grand parents and grand children and between a woman and her husband's younger brother. The rule of inheritance follow male equigeniture and succession is through the eldest son.

The status of Bhavsar women is lower than that of men. They have no right of inheritance. Women folk help in economic activities, but their role in decisions making is marginal.

Pre-delivery rituals or *godvarna* is observed in the first pregnancy. Birth pollution is observed for forty days by the mother. Post-delivery rituals include *Suraj-puja* and the naming ceremony for the child which is observed on the first Holi after birth. *Mundan* or shaving of the head, is performed to the male child between the first and the third year of his birth.

Negotiations for an arranged marriage gets ritually confirmed with *sagai* (betrothal) and the marriage ceremony starts with the worship of Lord Ganesh and anointing turmeric paste or *Pithi* to the bride and groom. Marriage is solemnised at the bride's place by a Brahman priest. Consummation of marriage takes place at the bride groom's house.

The Bhavsar cremate their dead and observe death pollution for a period of twelve days. On the third day ashes and bones are

immersed river water. *Shraddha* ceremony and community feast are held on the twelfth day.

Traditionally the Bhavsar were calico printers but in modern times many of them have become confectioners, tailors, sellers of brass ware etc. or taken up jobs in the public or private sector.

The Bhavsar have a council of elders at the community level. There is no formal *panch*. This settles the disputes of social nature involving members of the community. For criminal offences they seek redressal at the court of law. The modern community association is concerned about bringing in reforms and protect interests of the community members. The local self-governments are basically involved in implementing schemes.

The Bhavsars profess Hinduism and belong to various sects (panth) like Kabir, Radha Vallabha, Ramanand, Ramanuj, Satnam, Shaiva, Swaminarayan and Vallabhacharya etc. Their family goddesses are Ambaji and Hinglag. They visit the sacred shrine of goddess Hinglaj in Sind. The Sunday falling in the later half of the month of *Pause* (December-January) is observed by them as the birth day of the deity. They observe the various Hindu festivals and visit Hindu pilgrim centres.

Levels of literacy among men and women is high. Their attitude to modern medicare is favourable and they avail of its facilities. Their response to family planning programme is also positive and they use all modern family planning devices. They avail of the facility of electricity and the benefits of self-employment programmes IRDP scheme, etc. Mass communication through radio, TV and newspapers are available to them. Besides firewood and cow-dung cake they also avail of the facility of LPG gas and kerosene stoves. They get piped water in their houses and make use of fair-price shops. They also use public banking facilities.

D. K. Nanda.

BHAVSAR (JAIN)

The Jain Bhavsar are an endogamous unit to be distinguished from the Hindu (Vaishnav) Bhavsar on the basis of faith. They are distributed mainly in Vadodara Surat, Ahmedabad, Kheda and Valsed districts. They are largely an urban group. They claim to constitute around eighty per cent of the total Bhavsar population. The Bhavsar are traditionally a community of calico printers and block printers. Their mother tongue is Gujarati in which they speak and use Gujarati script. Educated ones are conversant in Hindi as well as English.

The Bhavsar are strictly vegetarian in their food habits. Wheat is the common cereal supplemented with rice. Cooking medium is ground-nut oil. Vegetables and pulses especially *tuvar* are consumed. Milk and milk products form essential item of their daily menu and tea is a common beverage. Some amount of *ghee* is taken regularly. Alcoholic drinks are prohibited. Having lighter food during illness is a common precaution. During the early part of the post-delivery period, a mother is given special food preparations and so also to the pregnant mothers.

The Bhavsar have a number of exogamous *ataks* (clans). Each clan has its mother goddess. These clans are exogamous units and indicate descent. They are of equal status. They have then units of marriage circles or 'gols' which are endogamous in nature. The *kutumb* or lineage includes all the kin having a common known ancestor. They have specific obligations in respect of life-cycle rituals. The Bhavsar enjoy a high status in the local social hierarchy. Other groups rank them at par with the Banias.

Community endogamy and clan exogamy are strictly observed. They have adult and marriages are settled through negotiation. A boy is married between twenty one and twenty four years of age while for the girls the marriage age ranges from eighteen to twenty years. Monogamy is the rule. Patrilocal residence after marriage is followed. Dowry is paid in the form gifts like ornaments and household articles. *Mangalsutra* (black bead necklace), *Mangal*

ghatli (red sari with white spots) and vermillion on the parting of the hair are the symbols of a married women. Divorce is not permitted and widow-marriage is a taboo. A widower however is free to marry again.

Vertically extended type of family is common. Nuclear type of family also coexist. The old and the disabled are made to feel secure within the family. The inter-personal relation in the family are governed by love, affection, obligation, co-operation and mutual trust. Avoidance relations exist between a woman and her husband's father and elder brother as well as similar kin, she has a joking relation with her husband's younger brother and sister. She respects her husband's mother and elder sister. Sons inherit the parental property of which they get an equal share. The eldest son succeeds the father. In case a person having no sons, the daughter inherit the property. He may also adopts his daughter's son as his legal heir. Inter-family linkages are kin based e.g. a *biradari* group consisting of kin having common descent in the male line and their wives constitute a unit. New linkages are now developing with non-kin families in the neighbour hood also but largely it is community based.

The Bhavsar women are engaged in domestic work and are helping their husbands in economic activities but only within the household. They have specific roles in rituals and family management and have a say in all family decisions but the final decision making rests with the head of the family. The women have a status next to that of their men.

A pre-natal ritual *simanta* is performed in the seventh month of pregnancy. The expectant woman is given a new set of clothes and special food items are prepared for her. Offerings are made in the temple for a safe delivery. A feast is arranged. In case of first delivery she is taken to her father's house. A separate room is specified for her confinement. In rural areas, a mid-wife's services are sought. Urban families prefer hospital or maternity home.

Immediately after the child birth, a Brahman *pandit* is consulted in casting the horoscope and in naming of the child. Pollution period is observed by the family members for ten days. Naming is performed on the first day and to enter into the records ceremonially the sixth day after birth. After the completion of the pollution period, the house is thoroughly cleaned and offerings

are made at the temple. The young mother cannot start cooking till the expiry of the period of pollution which extends upto forty days to give her a complete rest for speedy recovery. A male baby undergoes *babri utarna* or *mundan* or tonsure when he becomes a year old at a temple or a sacred spot.

Marriage are not solemnised during *chaturmas* or four sacred rainy months. The peak marriage season starts with *Tulsi Vivah* and continues for a month or so. Again during summer months marriages are solemnised. The marriage negotiation is ritually confirmed with the betrothal or *sagai* or *shagpan* ceremony which is performed some fifteen to twenty days prior to the marriage date. An auspicious date is finalised for marriage as suggested by a Brahmin priest. Schedule for the various rituals of marriage is conveyed by the members of the bride's family to the groom a few days before the date of marriage, which initiate the marriage process.

The actual marriage ritual or *phera* (circumambulating the sacrificial fire) takes place in day hours at the bride's house. The *pithi* ie. anointing oil turmeric paste to the bride and the groom at their respective houses takes place on a day earlier the day of wedding. This is done by five married women having their husbands alive. These ladies are close kin comprising of elder brother's wife or their parallals. Presence of widows is considered inauspicious on such occasions. After the *pithi* ceremony, the bride or the groom cannot go out of their house, and secondly the marriage cannot be postponed under any circumstances. The boy and the girl then takes ablutions administered by the married ladies. His elder brother's wife and similar kins are included among those five married ladies. He then gets dressed in groom's attire and receives blessings from the family goddess or *Kuldevi* and then from the elders present. After an early lunch (feast) for relatives and associates, the groom's party (*jan*) leaves for the girl's house. The *jan* consists of family members and other affines. It is welcomed at the bride's house. The boy reaches the main entrance of the bride's house and performs the *toran* ceremony (the auspicious decorative doorway) with a stick. Then he is welcomed by the bride's mother and taken to the *mandap* (marriage booth) or canopy where the *mangal phera* is performed. *Kanyadan* or giving away of the daughter in marriage as gift is done by the girl's father or by her mother's brother. During the *Phera*, the couple

circumambulate the sacrificial fire for four times taking the oath of conjugal fidelity (Grahasthashram). A Brahmin priest performs the rituals. It is followed by a feast and bidding farewell or *Vidai*. Before this groom ritually demolishes the *mandap*. The couple along with the *jan* leave for the husband's home. There the couple is welcomed by his mother. That night, the groom and bride sleep separately. The couple pays respect to the family Goddess. Consummation of marriage takes place there. Ladies sing special songs on these occasions. The bride lives at her husband's house for three days after which her brother takes her back. She finally returns to live with her husband after a few days. On the first Diwali after marriage, the couple is specially invited by the girl's father. They are given presents, which include clothes and other things and this is known as *paheliana*.

The Bhavsar cremate their dead. The eldest son acts as the chief mourner. The body is bathed and covered by a shroud. The widow takes reverse round (*phera*) of the corpse and give up her symbols of marriage for the rest of her life. Sons and other family members carry the bier to the cremation ground. The corpse is taken out of the house, with the legs first. Women do not go to the cremation ground. All mourners in the funeral procession take bath before returning to the house of the deceased to disperse. On third day, the members of the family take the first ablutions. The ashes are disposed in river water. Pollution period is observed for eleven days. During this period, relatives cannot take part in or perform any auspicious ceremony such as a marriage. They do not go to the temple and in rare cases even if they go do not make any offerings. Simple food without ghee is prepared. They take the final purificatory bath on the eleventh day and the house is thoroughly cleaned. Offerings in the temple are made on twelfth day. *Mundan* or head-shaving even for the chief mourner is not essential. *Shani Path* or reading or reciting of holy texts is performed in the temple. There remains a funeral feast for kin and associates.

Due to the mechanisation of textile printing their traditional occupation of block-printing has ceased to be a dependable means of livelihood. It has initiated diversification in their occupation. They have taken to white collar jobs and petty trade, employees in industrial urban section etc.

At the community level, they have an organisation which looks

after the social welfare of the community and protect its interest and initiate reforms. Members are selected by consensus. The community elder at the local level settles the disputes of social nature, like marriage, quarrel etc. For criminal offences they seek redressal at the law courts. Fines are imposed depending on the severity of the offence. Like other urban citizens of the country they are under the jurisdiction of local self-government institutions.

They Bhavsar profess Jainism and belong to the Shvetambar sect and follow the tenets of non-violence. At the gotra level, they have a Goddess who is worshipped daily and also on special occasions. Their sacred centres of pilgrimage are Palitana, Girnar, Keshariaji, Pawapuri etc. The Brahman conducts the marriage ritual, Jain *pandits* make the offerings on their behalf and perform rituals in Jain temples. The *sevak* (Brahman group) also serves in Jain temples. Mahavir Jayanti, Paryusan, Diwali, Ambeddi etc are their major festivals. They make offerings to various tirthankaras in Jain tradition.

The Bhavsar share the local tradition of folk songs with other Jain and non-Jain communities.

The Bhavsar have economic linkages with other white - collar castes through generations. They do not accept water from the Scheduled Castes. They do not have connubial relations with any other community. They have access to the common public welfare facilities provided by the Government such as water supply etc. Jajmani system has become non-functional and now the terms of trade are in cash. Modern inter-community linkages are developing at the occupational and market levels.

Literacy levels are quite high. Girls are also sent to schools but more attention in this regard to the boys. In the field of higher education also they have made progress. Their attitude towards modern medicare is favourable and avail of it. They are aware of the family welfare programmes and civic amenities are available to them. They are acquainted with the modern mass media. They avail of the benefits of public distribution system and make necessary purchases from fair price-shops. They are aware of the banking facilities and avail of it.

D.K. Samanta

BHIL

The Bhil are one of the largest tribal communities in India spread over contiguous area covering four large states, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhy Pradesh. Garasia, Vasava and Tadavi are the major groups of the Bhils in Gujarat. Regarding the origin of the Bhils there are references to them in the Bhagawata Purana, Mahabharata, Ramayana and other Sanskrit literary sources. The Bhil are sometime Known as Nishada, Guha and Shabara. It appears that Bhil is a generic term and in the ancient literature it is used for all those communities who live in the forests. In Tamil the word 'Bhilawar' means a bowman. The Bhils are historically first referred to around the time period 600 A.D. The Rajput still recognise the Bhil as the original inhabitants which is evident by the fact that some Rajput chiefs had to be marked on the brow with Bhil blood on occasion of their coronation or succession to the throne. A similar custom is prevalent in Rajpipla where the headman, the Vasava of Rajpipla marks the forehead of the new king of the state with a '*tika*' a marking. In Gujarat they are spread mainly in the districts of Banaskantha, Bharuch, Dangs, Kheda, Mahesana, Panchmahal, Sabarkantha, Surat, Vadodra and Valsad. They occupy mostly unfertile lands. According to 1981 census the total population of Bhil and the notified subgroups such as Bhil Garasia, Dholi Dungri Bhil, Vasava, Vasave etc. is 2,030,438. The Bhil speak a variety of dialects referred to generally as the Bhilli. They also speak in the local dialect of Gujarati and use Gujarati script.

The skin colour of the Bhils is generally brown, In Dangs the Bhils are mostly dark. People with a fair complexion are also seen among the Bhil Garasias of Sabarkantha and Banaskantha districts. The Bhils have a physical stature ranging from five feet to five feet six inches. Majumdar (1944) conducted an anthropometric survey of the Bhils of Panch Mahals district and has come out with the following result.

Characters	Mean	Values
Stature	162.67	.499
Max.head breadth	137.48	.339
Max.head length	181.87	.430
Bizygomatic breadth	131.32	.335
Nasal length	84.60	.241
Total facial length	112.22	.486
C.I.	75.65	.206
N.I.	77.19	.593
T.G.I.	85.64	.362

On conducting a similar survey of the Bhils of West Khandesh, he found that the Bhils of Khandesh are different from those of the Panch Mahals. He concludes that Bhil is a generic name given to the various indigenous people of the land by the newer groups. Majumdar (1941) had the blood samples of 369 Bhils of both the sexes. The data generated the following percentages. 87.5 percent O, 27.5 percent A, 26.0 percent B, 9.0 percent AB. He compared the blood groups of the Panchmahal Bhils with the Bhils of Rajpipla. He agrees with Macfarlane's estimate of B concentration in Bhils and says that 'we have to seek for reservoirs of group B elsewhere than among the Bhils. The blood groups of Bhils collected by Mrs. Uma Basu also depict a percentages analogous to that obtained by Dr. Majumdar. The blood group evidence shows that the Bhils might have belonged to the original racial stock. These are indications that they have been thoroughly hybridised by contacts with alien races.

The Bhils are non-vegetarian. They eat fish including dry fish, crab, eggs, poultry birds, mutton, fowl and the Bhils of Dangs district also eat occasionally the meat of buffalo. In the forest areas the wild game are a delicacy to them. Maize is the staple cereal though it is generally substituted by rice and various kinds of millets, such as *bajra*. During festivals and on ceremonial occasions they take rice and cakes prepared out of rice and molasses. Their daily meal also consist of locally grown vegetables, leafy vegetables, roots, tubers and various kinds of pulses. They use oil extracted from *mohua* seeds as the cooking medium. During summer the poor Bhil eat *mohua* flowers which they fry. In the forest areas the Bhils also collect some honey and consume liquor

which is usually extracted from *mohua* flowers or molasses. In Baroda the Bhils also drink quantities of palm juice, or toddy as the palm trees grow wild in these localities. The Bhils smoke indigenous *bidi* and young boys and girls chew tobacco for cleaning their teeth. They Sometimes consume butter milk with roti.

The Bhils are divided into a number of endogamous territorial divisions which in turn have a number of clans and lineages. Social cohesiveness is observed among the *hagawadias* (affinals) of the Bhils of Bharuch which encompasses five to ten villages where they have moved for selecting their spouses. In the Dangs the Bhils are clearly divided into two sub-divisions- the Rajwari Bhil i.e. the people consisting of the Bhil Rajas and their consanguinals and the ordinary or Kalia Bhil or Nikhar Bhil. The latter section is now also known as Pawra Bhil which seems to be their only clan name. In terms of regional hierarachy the Bhil are considered a group lower to any other Hindu and Hinduised tribal group and even when they are compared with any other Hinduised section of the Bhil. The Bhil in turn consider the scheduled castes (the Bhangi the Chammer etc.) lower than them in social status.

The Bhil are endogamous, preferring to marry within the same subgroup. They maintain the norms of clan exogamy by prohibiting selections from patri - and matrilineages upto five ascending and descending generations. Marriagable age for a Bhil boy ranges between 20 years to 24 years and that of a girl between 18 years to 20 years. Marriage by negotiation is regarded most prestigious though marriage by service, pre-marital courtship, elopement, etc. are also practised by them. The Vasava Bhil of hilly areas in Bharuch practice matri - loteral cross cousin marriage. In other districts also marriages with mother's brother's daughter is permissible. They are monogamous but polygyny is practised if the first wife is infertile or having only daughters. Bride price is paid both in cash and kind. Till the full payment of bride price, a marriage is considered as *ardhy vivah* ie., half marriage and in such cases some of the important ceremonial proceedings are not held by the brides' family. A Bhil woman puts on silver or brass rings on her toes and covers her head with on *odni*, or a head scarf as symbols of her married status. She goes to live in her husband's house after marriage. Divorce is permissible in Bhil

society to both spouses but is subject to approval by the caste council. The caste council of the Bhils is always in favour of terminating an unsuccessful marriage rather than allow it to continue with tension. In a divorce case if the women asks for it, her father is to pay back the bride price that he received from his son-in-law. But if she is driven out by her husband his claim for such compensation is usually declared null and void by the caste council. The children are the liability of the father. A divorced person, both male and female can remarry.

Among the Bhil extended families were the norm, but it is now being replaced by nuclear families. The property inheritance rights which is based on male equageniture. Succession is through the eldest son on the death of the father. Inter-family linkages are maintained through performance and common observance of social and religious functions in the customary manner and also through co-operation in economic matters as far as practicable.

Women are considered inferior because they are impure. They are prohibited from visiting the village shrines and offering worship to any deity. She is not allowed membership in the caste council but in domestic matters and in contributing to the family economy her role is considered important and she is consulted in all household matters by her husband. Old age for a Bhil woman is not so pleasant because the Bhils believe that an old woman can turn into a *dakhan* or witch at any time and because of this they avoid interaction with them.

The Bhil have a special ritual connected with child-birth. On the fourth or fifth day after the birth of a female child, *Panchawari* ceremony is observed and on the eight day in the case of a male child *athwari* which is a birth ritual presided over by the *hiarchy* or *suarin* or mid-wife. The baby's name is also conferred by the same mid-wife to it or may be done by the parents of child. With the performance of this rite the mother and the baby are considered free from pollution or '*ragat*'. No special rite is usually observed by the Bhils when their boys and girls attain the age of puberty, but a girl or woman during her menstrual period is to maintain some restrictions in order to avoid pollution of their kitchen which is also the seat of the family deity. Besides, they are prohibited from touching a plough, the most important agricultural implement for their livelihood. As part of their marriage rituals they worship

the family deity and the village deities. These rituals are performed by the head of the family who is normally the oldest male member of the family. Consummation of marriage takes place in the house of the bride-groom on the day after the marriage, when a feast is held by his family for the members of the community in the customary manner.

The Bhil cremate their dead. After cremating the dead they take a purificating bath. On the fourth day after death, in Dangs and in some other districts or on any day within twelve days of the event the family of the deceased perform *dish* or *kanto*, a ritual that frees them from death pollution. This is presided over by a *bhagat*, traditional priest. Ancestor worship by the head of the family is also an essential part of this rite.

Land is the main economic resource of the Bhils. Besides, the ecology of their habitat also makes them dependent on forest resources as well for their livelihood. They are mainly a land owning community but the majority of them are small and marginal land holders and occupy only the marginally productive lands having little or no irrigation facilities. They depend mostly on rain for cultivation.

At the level of the village, a council or *gaon panch* is headed by a chief *Patel*, who is assisted by the elderly persons (*agewans*) of the community. At the regional level also their council is headed by a chief who is also assisted by a minimum of one representative from each village under its jurisdiction. It is generally represented by a member from each clan and prominent lineage of the community of each village. For an offence like theft, minor physical assault, illicit sex relations and material loss caused to anyone, the village council punishes the offender in the form of compensation to be made to the victim along with a fine of Rs. 12/- to Rs. 51/- according to the nature of the case. The regional council deals with issues like major injury, serious theft, incest, divorce etc. and for which offenders are made liable to fines ranging from Rs. 51/- to 151/- to the council and a suitable amount is also recovered from them as compensation to the victim. For violating the order of a council a person is liable to excommunication by the Bhil Society. With the new panchayat system, based on adult franchise the Bhils have lost their hereditary positions as village heads in many of the villages

particularly where they surrendered numerical dominance to the other ethnic groups. These other communities who are culturally and educationally more advanced do not miss the opportunity to occupy positions in district panchayats.

The religion of the Bhils is a mixture of traditional religion with Hinduism. They worship local gods, ghosts and spirits but also gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. Animals and plants, trees and places, which are useful or induce fear, forces of nature like rain, mountain and mysterious beyond their comprehension are held in high esteem, looked at with awe and worshipped. Belief in magic and witchcraft is universal. They have their house deities like *Kotharin devi*, goddess of crop-Kamasree Devi, lineage diety Are woril, regional deities like *Pan Deo*, *Indar Deo* (rain god) etc. They go on a pilgrimage to the shrines of these deities and make offerings for fulfilling a vow. *Punjara* is their traditional priest for religious occasions. *Sayanc* is the woman who presides over a birth ritual (in Baroda district), *Badua* is their medicineman curing people and cattle alike through indigenous medicines. *Bhagat* is a sacred specialist who can detect a witch and can save them from his spells with the help of his *matras*. The Hinduised Bhils now invite Brahman priests to preside over their marriage ceremonies, funeral rites and also for other religious functions. *Simga* (spring festival) and Dahara Diwali (festival of lights) are their greatest festivals. Besides, they also celebrate Nag Panchami, Janmasthanmi and Shivaratri in many places. Apart from the animistic Hindu Bhils, there are small sections of the Bhils in different parts of Gujarat who are now the followers of particular religious sects like Mahadev Panthi, Kafir Panthi, Nanak panthi, Islam and Christianity.

They have their oral traditions in the form of folk songs, folklore, folk tales and folk dances which they display during ceremonial and festive occasions.

The Bhils live in multi-caste villages. The Hinduised Bhils who have developed traditional linkages with the Brahmans also observe many Hindu festivals jointly with other Hindu communities of the village. Inter-community marriage relations had given rise many new subsections of the Bhils in the past. They depend on the major land-owning communities of the locality and neighbouring districts for providing them with both as day labour and as share-

croppers. The Bhils accept cooked food and water from all Hindu communities except the Harijans (Scheduled Castes). The caste Hindu however does not accept cooked food and water from their hands. The concept of putative kinship is not clear to the Bhils. They share wells and other water resources with Hindu communities but not with the Harijans. They have separate crematorium of their own. They share roads, schools and Panchayat house with all others in the village but they hesitate to enter a temple and the houses of other communities. Similarly they do not like members from other communities entering their kitchen which is the seat of their family deity. The Bhils participate in political activities and public functions held in their own village but their representation in statutory public bodies at taluka and district level is rare.

Except in a few talukas of Panchmahal district the Bhil are educationally very backward. In rural areas the rate of literacy among them varies between the males and the females. Regarding health and medicare they still favour their traditional medicinemen who offer cures and medicines made out of local plants and in some cases resort to *mantras* or chants to cure them. They are now adopting measures of birth control and family planning to the influence and propaganda of the local administration but only after having three to four children. They fetch their drinking water from wells and rivers. With the help of the IRDP programme a small number of Bhils have benefitted in almost all the villages. On account of their socio-economic disabilities and lack of education they are unable to find avenues of self-employment. A few of the Bhil families keep transistor sets for recreation and occasionally to listen to the news. The younger generation is fond of the cinema taking in a show whenever they go to the towns. Electricity is availed of by only a small number of Bhil families, the majority being unable to afford. They use mostly wood as fuel. Irrigation facilities are rarely available to them. Use of chemical fertilisers and insecticides is minimal. Their children avail of mid-day meals at school. The public distribution of food grains does not benefit them because of the irregular availability of food grains etc. Banking facilities are available in most of their localities but they cannot utilise them, on account of ignorance and instead they depend upon the money-lenders who supply

them money in times of need and charge a high rate of interest from it.

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BHIL/DUNGRI-GARASIA

Dungri literally means hills and Garasia means grass. The term Garsia is derived from the word grass, along with modified versions such as 'Giras'. People who have cleared the forests and prepared it for cultivation are the Dungri-Garasia. They recall their migration from Mewar of Rajasthan roughly about three hundred years ago. They were the subjects of Maharana Pratap Singh. When he was defeated by Muslim rulers, they dispersed to the hilly areas of Gujarat adjacent to Mewar. Presently they are mainly distributed in the talukas of Meghraj, Bhiloda, Bijohnagar and Khed Brahma of Sabarkantha district. Nevertheless they never admit to being Bhils, pure and simple, (Gujarat State Gazetteers, Sabarkantha District, 1974). They communicate in Mewari, amongst themselves and with outsiders in Gujarati. Gujarati script is used. The Dungri Garasia have been listed under the scheduled tribes category.

The Dungri-Garasias are non-vegetarian and eat meat, egg, fish, chicken etc. The Bhagats are strictly vegetarian and are teatotalitarians. The main cereals are maize and *wheat*, various pulses and vegetables are taken. They prefer groundnut oil and *doritel* (prepared out of *mohua* flowers), as cooking medium. They consume alcoholic drinks which is either prepared or purchased from the local markets. They consume fruits very occasionally. They are very fond of smoking tobacco and *bidi*.

The Dungri Garasia are endogamous in nature. There are two sections i.e. *Bhagat* and *Samsar*. The marital exchanges between these two sections are somewhat restricted. They have various *ataks* or clan like groupings such as Pandor, Parmer, Moria, Damor, Gameti, Taral, Bagora, Katara etc. and these are associated with Devs (gods) and Devis (goddesses). The *ataks* are equal in status and there is strict rule of *atak* exogamy. The self-perception of the community conceiving its social status among other tribal groups of that region is high but other communities regard them as of low social status.

Marriage is prohibited in the clans of father's mother's brother

or of his mother's brother. The age at marriage is seventeen to eighteen years in case of females and twenty to twenty-five in case of males. Marriage alliances are made through negotiations. Monogamy is the form of marriage. The *pinjara* (ankle ring) and *oaghania* (ear ring) are the symbols of married woman earlier. Now-a-days along with ear rings, vermillion on the parting of the hair is also used as a symbol. Bride price as token amount of Rs 8 is given to bride's father. Patrilocal residence after marriage is the practice. Divorce by both parties is permitted. Children being the liability of the father in divorce cases. Widow remarriage is not permitted but there is no prohibition of widower remarriage.

Nuclear families are more common than extended families. Male equigeniture is the rule of inheritance. Incase of no male issue then property is inherited by daughter's husband. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family. Inter-family linkages within the locality are based on the co-operation.

Women have a significant role in agricultural operations, animal husbandry, collection of fuel, potable water etc. Decisions in family matters are taken by the male members in consultation with the women of the family. The women contribute to the family income but overall family expenditure is controlled by the male members. On the whole, the women have low status.

The first delivery of a woman takes place at her natal home. The mid-wife assists in child birth though these days some deliveries take place in the nearby hospitals or in health centers. After delivery the mother is confined to a room for nearly thirty days. The *tonsure* ceremony of the new-born is performed. Child is given a name five or six days after birth. Any kin member from both sides can select a name for the newborn.

Marriage ceremonies last for five to nine days. Actual rituals take place on an auspicious day which is fixed in consultation with the *bhagat*. Before the actual marriage rituals all the members of the village assemble at the bride's and groom's house. In the evening the villagers sing songs regarding love, heroism, acts of bravery etc. In this way they pass seven days before the actual marriage rituals start. On the eighth day, the *dula* (bridegroom) goes to bride's house in the evening with his relatives and friends. The *bhagat* officiates at the rituals. Both the bride and groom perform seven *feras* (circumambulations) around the sacred fire.

The groom's family offer some ornaments to the bride on this occasion. The nuptial ceremony is performed at the groom's residence.

The dead are cremated. Many relatives go to the cremation ground with a *lakari* (firewood) in their hands. The eldest son lits the pyre. Mourning period is observed for twelve days. During these days the household members do not use a cot to sleep. On the twelfth day, *shradh* ceremony is observed. The *bhagat* performs the rituals.

The Dungri-Garasia are mainly settled agriculturalists and land is their major source of income. Two rain-fed crops are cultivated, though irrigation is also practiced. Many people are engaged as agricultural labourers. System of *hundel* (exchange of reciprocal labourers between agricultural families) is reported. The system of *pagdi* (the agricultural contract labour) also exists. Middlemen purchase the agricultural products from these people to market it. Children below fifteen years of age also participate in agricultural and other economic activities. Some persons are engaged in service and a few doctors and engineers are reported.

The Dungri-Garasia have their own traditional council at the regional level and local level. The central *panch* committee is headed by a President and his deputy Vice-President at the upper level. The President and his deputy are selected by a voice vote of the village *panch*. The headman of the village is called *Mukhia* who is also selected by a voice-vote. Village level disputes are settled by the *Mukhia* though the final judgment is given by the central *panch* committee. This *panch* committee is homogenous in nature. The most prevalent disputes in the community are over land and water. The post-independence statutory panchayat elected by adult franchise looks after welfare programmes.

Dungri-Garasia believe in tribal religion and Shyamlajimata is their chief deity. They mainly believe in their respective *Kuldev* (clan god) and *kuldevi* (clan goddess) i.e. *Piprahideb*, *Ambamata*, *Kharhel* and *Kaduel* etc. They participate in the fairs of *Shyamlajimata*, *Umbaria ka mela* etc. In the month of *Kartik*, the fairs associated with the *Shyamlajimata* are observed with great enthusiasm. The temple of *Shyamlajimata* is situated in the Bhiloda taluka of Sabarkantha district. *Jala* is a god of stone which is worshipped to protect the domesticated animals from the wild

animals of forest. Besides these fairs, they celebrate and participate with great enthusiasm in the festivals of *Holi*, *Diwali* and *Navratri*. *Holi* is the most popular festival among them which is celebrated for almost one month. Some people are the followers of Pandurung Shastri's ideas.

Folk songs are sung at the time of marriage. Besides this they possess rich folklore. They are also very fond of dance and music which are performed at the time of marriage and the festivals of *Holi*, *Dewali* etc.

The Dungri-Garasias take water and food from higher castes but inter-community marital exchanges are strictly prohibited. They participate in local level, taluka level and district level political activities and public functions. Their activities concerning traditional inter-community linkages have lessened to some extent although not vanished totally.

They have benefitted by the existing development programmes to a considerable extent. The average level of formal education for the boys is secondary or higher secondary. The girls study up to primary or secondary levels. They are availing of both modern and indigenous medicare. Towards family planning programmes, their attitude is not very favourable. Some families have been benefitted by the IRDP schemes and other developmental schemes. The boys and girls get books, cloths and mid-day meals from the school. Electricity has reached their locality. They use kerosene oil and firewood as fuel. A few also use chemical fertilizers and insecticides. Most of the people of this community are ration cards holders.

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BHIL/VASAVA

The Vasava section of Bhil trace their descent from Eklavya. They originally hail from south Gujarat and some districts of Madhya Pradesh. They are concentrated in Vadodara, Surat, Bharuch, Panch Mahals districts of Gujarat. The mother tongue of the Vsavas is Bhil dialect, but they speak Gujarati with others. Gujarati script is used. Some male inmates Vasava speak in Hindi. Separate population figure is not available in view of their inclusion under the Bhil, a major scheduled tribe of the state.

They are non-vegetarian. Their common cereal is *jowar*. *Bajra* (millet) and wheat are also consumed by them. *Tur* (pigeon pea) and *moong* (green grain) are the main pulses consumed. They take meat of goat, sheep etc, besides, chicken, egg and fish. They use palmoline oil as cooking medium. Different kinds of locally available roots and tubers are used. Very occasionally fruits are taken. Milk is consumed by children. The people take tea. Alcoholic drinks are taken moderately by men. Men and women smoke *bidi* and cigarette and chew tobacco and betel leaves. On festive occasion they prepare various kinds of special dishes like *shira*, *lapsi*, *sweet rice*, etc. They are turning to vegetarian diet due to high prices of non-vegetarian food.

They are an endogamous community. They claim high status than Bhangi, Vagri, Vankar etc. and lower than the Baria, Thakur etc. Other communities also rank Vasava in medium position.

They maintain community endogamy and village exogamy. Levirate and -sororate types of marriages are preferred. Traditionally, they practised child marriage but now-a-days, age for girls is ranges from 17 to 20 years and for boys from 19 to 22 years. Monogamy is the norm, though polygyny was practised by few of them in earlier days. Symbol of a married woman is silver *jangra* (anklet). The groom's party pay a minimum of hundred to five hundred rupees as bride price in addition in kind such as ornaments, clothes, utensils etc. After marriage the bride goes to stay with her husband. Divorce is permissible in the community.

The traditional council settles the divorce cases and the compensation is paid to the aggrieved party. The liability of children is always with the father. Men and women can seek divorce and remarry. Widow and widower remarriages are also permissible.

Nuclear of family predominates over extended type. Joking relationship is allowed with one's sister-in-law (elder brother's wife), brother-in-law (husband's younger brother and wife's younger brother). After the death of the father, the sons get equal share of father's property and the eldest son succeeds as head of the family.

Women have a low status as compared to that of their men. Women do not have any right in ancestral property. Family expenditure is managed and handled by menfolk. Women do take part in all the social, ritual, religious activities alongwith their men. A good number of women work as daily wage labourers or agricultural labourers. Women primarily attend to household, chores, do collection of fuel and bring potable water.

A pregnant woman is taken to her natal home for the first delivery during the seventh month of pregnancy when her father gives a feast to close relatives. A coconut, a set of clothes, silver rakri are placed in her lap. Elder persons bless her, give cash gift. Delivery takes place with the help of a traditionally experienced *suiari* (mid-wife). Few deliveries take place in maternity homes when any complication arises. They follow post-delivery pollution for forty days. On the fourth day, the new born child is named by his/her father's sister, father, mother or grand parents. Friends and relatives are given a feast.

The marital alliance is arranged by parents and elder persons. An engagement ceremony called *sagai* is held in which the parents of the groom give five to ten rupees to the girl and the bride's parents give eleven rupees, one pant piece and some times a watch to the boy. Marriage takes place after fifteen to forty-five days of engagement. *Lagan* (marriage) is celebrated at the bride's place. Two to three days before marriage, the groom as well as bride are applied with turmeric paste followed by a ritual bath four to five hours before *lagan* known as *puosh bharalu*. Then groom's party goes to bride's place with gifts of ornaments, clothes, utensils etc to be given to the bride. A *mandap* (pandal) is decorated with different flowers, coloured papers etc under which marriage

is performed. Bride and groom make four *fera* (circumambulations) of the sacred fire. The bride and groom garland each other. All of the invitees give presents to the newly married couple. Newly married seek blessings from all the elder relatives. A feast is arranged by the bride's party. The groom's party with the bride leaves for groom's house on the next day. The consummation of marriage takes place there.

The dead are cremated but children up to ten years of age are buried. After the death of a person his/her body is given a bath and wrapped up in new clothes of white and red colour respectively. The men are covered with new white cloth and women with red. The body placed on a bamboo bier and on the corners of which coconuts are tied. Female do not accompany the funeral procession. A woman returns to her house after performing four *fera* around her dead husband. After performing four *feras* of the dead body, the pyre is lit by the eldest son. They collect the ashes and bones into an earthen pot on the second day which is later immersed in the nearest river. On the seventh day, the family's menfolk get their head shaved by a local Nai (barber). On the eleventh day they perform *Sharadh* ceremony. Children are invited on the twelfth day and a big feast is given on the thirteenth day.

The Vasava was traditionally a hunting and food gathering community. Now-a-days they depend on agriculture labour or daily wage labour. Those who own a piece of land grow *dangar* (paddy), *jawar*, *bajra*, wheat, *kodhra* cereals and different kinds of pulses such as *moong* (green grain), *tur* (pegeion pea) etc. A good number of Vasava people have taken up jobs in government and non-government offices. Few families are doing petty business. Wages are paid in cash.

The traditional caste council consists of elected office bearers of elder and educated people from different villages. This is totally a homogenous institution. They meet at a place to decide and settle their conflicts, quarrels, adultery, divorce, theft etc that are brought to their notice. Divorce is sanctioned by the *panch*. The *panch* fixes any amount of fine and compensation on the defaulter depending upon the nature of the case. In case of inter-caste marriage, the couple is ex-communicated from village. If any person does not honour the decision of the *panch*, then he and his family are socially boycotted. Every village has modern statutory

panchayat which is a heterogeneous institution whose function is to plan and implement welfare and development programmes of the habitats over which they have control.

The Vasava follow the Hindu religion. Only *lagan* ceremony is performed by a Brahman, whereas other ceremonies are performed by an aged man of the community. Some Vasava go to Brahman for getting *janampatri* (horoscope) of the new born baby. The Vasava community has one *kuldevi* (family deity). They also believe in spirits. At Navaratri festival, they worship their *kuldevi*. They visit Hanumanji, Bhateji, Milarimata, Baraimata and Mahakali temple to get relief from all types of anxiety. Many festivals are observed like Shivaratri, Holi, Dhoreti, Diwali etc. Besides they also take part in local fairs of regional deities like *Bagoria mela*, *Orani mela* etc.

The community has both folk tales and folklore. Some folk songs are sung by Vasava women. Special songs and dances are arranged on the occasion of marriage. During Navratri festivals both male and female folks sing devotional songs.

The Vasava have traditional linkages with other village communities as agricultural and daily wage labourers. They have hereditary links with economically and socially higher groups like Bania, Brahman, Thakur etc. for survival. Traditionally they accept both cooked, uncooked food and water from Bania, Brahman and Thakore communities but they in turn do not accept from the Vasava, though all communities join the Vasava in all the ceremonial and other rituals. They do not take water from Bhangi, Bagri, Vankar, etc. The Vasava community collects water from well and tap water in their locality. They share common road, school, crematorium, with other neighbouring communities in the village.

Literacy among the Vasava is low. The boys are sent to primary schools more than girls. Girls are mainly engaged in household work. Vasava have taken up petty business in trading with different articles and goods. Very few of them are teachers, workers in government and non-government departments. They make use of modern medical care in addition to indigenous medicare. Primary health centre is situated within the locality. They also go to private doctors for better treatment. Their attitude towards family planning is favourable. The drinking water is collected from ring well and

tap water. Radio, cinema, newspapers are the main media of communication. Electricity facilities are availed at by some. Fuel resources are fire wood, kerosene oil and cow dung cakes. Nutrition programme through ICDS in schools are enjoyed by their children. Government fair price shops are situated in their village. Shop keepers of their area are the main money-lenders of the Vasava.

Biplab Das

BHISTI

The community also known as Bishti and Pakhalli, a name they got as they claim to house supplied water in a *masak* (a leather water container) to quench the thirst of the soldiers in the holy war of Arabia. The name Bishti is derived from *bahista/vahista* which mean heaven in Arabic, Since they provided people with water they came to be described by this term. Mughal emperor Akbar is believed to have given this name to the community. They live in the heart of Ahmedabad City. Enthoven (1920) writes that they are also known as Mashiks (waterbag-men), numbering 607 (1901 census) and are said to be the descendants from Hindu Bhoris. They speak Gujarati and are also conversant with urdu. They use both the Gujarati and Arabic script.

The Bhisti are non-vegetarians and consuming beef. They also take fish, eggs and their staple cereals are wheat and rice. Vegetables including tubers are consumed regularly. Fruits are taken only on some special occasions. Tea is a common beverage. Men take alcoholic drinks, procured from the local market.

The community is an endogamous unit. Both parallel and cross-cousins are allowed as partners and patrilineal parallel cousins are preferred. Earlier practiced child marriage is giving way to adult marriage. Age at marriage for boys varies 18 to 21 years and for girls it is between 15 to 18 years. The mode of acquiring mate is through negotiation. Monogamy is the form of marriage yet polygyny is also practised. Divorce is permitted though looked down upon and takes place in rare circumstances. Rs. 127-50 Ps. toward *mehar* is promised to pay to the bride in the event of a divorce.

Nuclear families are the norm in this society. Joking relationships exist between a married woman and the younger brother and sister of her husband. It also characterizes the nature of the relationship between grand parents and grand children. Inheritance of property is patrilineal. Succession is through eldest son on the death of his father.

The Bhisti women contribute actively to the family income. In household affairs they have a prominent role. But their overall status is lower than their men.

Child birth occurs within the girl's natal home supervised by a midwife belonging to the community of Hazam. The name is conferred by the family itself. Birth pollution in the case of the Shia group lasts for either fourteen or twenty-one days till the performance of the *Aqiqa* ceremony and it lasts for forty days among other Bhisti group. Circumcision of the male child is performed within two to three months of birth by a doctor. On this occasion a feast is arranged attended by relatives and friends.

Special earthenware pots are decoratively arranged within the house some three days prior to the marriage ceremony which is also the occasion when *ubatna* (turmeric paste) is smeared on the bodies of the prospective groom and bride in their respective houses. Marriages are conducted strictly according to Islamic tradition with the *maulvi* or *kazi* presiding over it and registering the marriage in the presence of witnesses. Groom for the first time sees the reflection of his bride in a mirror. The bride then accompanies her husband to his house where consummation of marriage takes place.

The dead are buried. On the third day after death, *Ziarat* ceremony is held in which the relatives and friends of the deceased recite portions of the holy Koran in the mosque finishing with a prayer for the peace of the departed soul. A *Waaz* sermon is then delivered by the *Moulavi*. On this occasion a vessel with an aromatic oil is placed among the worshippers who drop a few flowers into it; this mixture finally being poured over the grave. On the fortieth day after death, a feast is given to the assembled members of the community members in memory of the deceased.

Traditionally the Bishti are a landless group and their hereditary occupation of supplying water in containers to the houses of the rich and in the fields. It is also declining in the face of modernisation. They have taken to alternative means of livelihood such as plying their distinctive style carts but even this is a decorative feature used mainly in marriage processions. Presently most of them are daily wage-earners in shops or they ply hand-carts and rickshaws. Women of the community engage themselves in bidi-making, kit making and other such petty pursuits through

which they contribute substantially to family income.

The community council, *Bisthi Panch* is a powerful corporate organization that actively involves itself in the life of its members by playing a role in all their life-cycle events and rituals. It is influential on account of the fact that it enjoys the power to penalise deviant members with social boycott.

The Bhisti profess Islam. They visit the local *masjid* to offer the prayers. Role of the sacred specialist such as *Moulavi*, *Pirs* etc. has important bearing on their religious life and who teach them Arabic language so that they can read the verses of Quran. They celebrate all major festivals like Ramzan, Backrid etc in accordance with traditions.

Traditionally, their profession was linked with other community. They have very little social linkages with other communities. People come to hire carts from them on payment basis. At present, this community is united under the *Bhisti Panch*. The *panch* (caste-council) does not permit any kind of connubial norms or putative kinship based or ritual friendships. They share water from the tube-wells. They are free labourers or workers. They work on payment basis.

Due to the active role of *Panch*, the children or young are getting education in Arabic languages in the *Panch* house itself than that of the modern education. As the people are living in the heart of the city, they try to have medical facilities and other health care programmes. The area is electrified and have drinking water facilities. Very few also able to avail of banking facility due to poverty.

N.K. Ghatak

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BHODALA

In Kachchi dialect, the term 'Bhadala' means seaman or fisherman or one who earns a livelihood by catching fish and navigating the sea. They are also called Bhodala in the Saurashtra region. The Bhodala originally hail from Kati *bandar* (Katiport near Karachi) of Sindh from where they migrated to Koteswar, then to Royan and Mandis Bhodala Phool to Juna Salaya. They came to Suna Salaya on the invitation of the then Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan who was pleased with their experience of navigation. They finally settled at Mota Salaya, Mandvi which is their present habitat given to them on lease for a 100 years free of cost by Maharaj Pragmalji, the then King of Kutch. Salaya Bhodala consider that the Bhodala of Narayansarovor were actually Vagher and not Bhodala (Vagher in Kachchi dialect means fishing). Due to the fear of the Hindus of Koteswar they referred to themselves as Bhodala. So the Bhodala of Salaya neither give nor take girls in marriage from the Bhodala of Narayansarovar, or Jakhavport of Lakhpatt and Abdass taluks respectively. According to another account they are said to have migrated from Arabia (Gazetter of Bombay Presidency, 1884). The Bhodala are believed to have migrated from Salaya Mandia to Jamsalya, Jamnagar, Veraval, Dwaraka, Bet and Porbandar port of Saurashtra. According to tradition of the Bhodala atleast 6000 of them were taken by William, an official in the British period to Mombasa for constructing a port. Some of them are also abroad. The Bhodala speak Kachchi and Gujarati script, is used. A few male members converse in Hindi also.

The Bhodala are non-vegetarian. They consume fish frequently. Meat of buffalo and camel is rarely eaten. *Bajri* and wheat are commonly taken. Onion and potato are commonly consumed along with pulses such as *moong* (green gram) and *chana* (Bengal gram) and they use groundnut oil as a cooking medium. *Suji* (Semsha) or *sayi* is a special sweet prepared during festivals. A few Bhodala males have the habit of consuming liquor procured from the local market.

The community is divided into clans, viz, Aspun, Meman, Thaima, Bholim, Turak, Dosoni, Karani, Nakhrani, Juneja, Sameja, Jadeja, Patha, Palleja, Koreza, Kandeza, Bhotti, Juspani, Zufrabadi and Chahan which are equal in status and named after their ancestors. The community considers itself superior to Langha and scheduled castes but rank lower than Brahman and Lohana and Miyaji (upper caste Muslims like Syed, Sheikh) in the local social hierarchy.

The Bhodala community follow Islamic traditions in their marriages. Parallel and cross-cousin marriages are the preferred forms. The age for marriage ranges from sixteen to seventeen years in case of a girl and eighteen to twenty two for a boy. A boy is permitted to marry only after he earns a steady income. Marriages are arranged by parents. Monogamy is practiced. Wearing of *siri* (nose ring) *worla* (silver neckband) and *kodi* now called *thoda* or *payal* (ankle chain) are considered symbols of a married woman. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriages. Divorce is permissible on grounds of maladjustment. Remarriage of a widow or a divorced woman and that of a widower is permissible. The child remains with the father in case of a divorce and with grand-father or father's relatives in case of death. Only sons inherit property. The eldest son succeeds the father.

Nuclear families are the most prevalent form followed by vertically extended families. Nuclear households are set up within a year of marriage due to the shortage of space in the ancestral or parental house. Aged parents prefer to live with any one of their married son who inherits the property in return for his services. Besides men, their women also have financial interaction with the surrounding communities selling fish. Most of the social, ritual and religious interaction is within the community or within the larger Muslim group.

Within the family woman play a role in ritual and religious activity but she yet has an inferior status. She manages household duties such as collecting fuel wood. She sells the catch brought in by her husband in the local market. She supplements family income even by taking up domestic jobs in the households of high caste neighbours.

First delivery takes place at the mother's house with the help of a trained mid-wife. The child is named on sixth day after birth

called *chatti*. The mother is considered unclean for forty days. The first *mundan* (tonsure) of the child is performed in the presence of the *dada* (the sacred specialist) who visits them atleast once a year. Circumcision is performed by a *Hajam* (barber) during summer when the male child is two to five years old.

Sagai (betrothal) ceremony is performed after receiving *khajmbi chunadi* (half sari) for the bride and later *khand* (sugar preparation) is distributed and tea served among the assembled relatives. A night before the marriage ceremony all assembled relatives and friends are entertained to music and songs which is called *shou*. *Nikah* is performed before 12 o'clock in the noon at the bride's house. The bride is sent to her in-laws along with her younger sister where the nuptial ceremony takes place. After spending seven nights in her husband's house which is known as *sathada* she is taken back by her mother or an elder female relative to her parental home. After spending two or three days there she goes back permanently to her in-law's house.

The dead are buried within two to six hours of death. After bathing and dressing of the corpse in a white cloth and placing it in the coffin covered with 'shawl' or 'khombhi' (new half saree) or a kerchief in case of a male, a married woman, and children upto the age of ten respectively. *ziarat* on third day *dasma* on the tenth day and the *chalisma* on fortieth day are performed within the household.

Water is the principal economic resource of the Bhodala community since navigation and fishing are their traditional and also principal contemporary occupations. Agriculture is a secondary occupation because of the uncertainty of rainfall and the lack of irrigation facilities. As soon as a boy attains the age of fourteen he is made to earn his livelihood. Quite a few of the Bhodala males work in the Merchant Navy at various sea ports. A few of them own their boats. On an average each boat provides employment to fifteen people. Wages are paid in cash. If they have sufficient yield, they sell to the local merchant and buy household commodities from him.

The community has a caste-council called Muslim Bhodala Jamat. The *Patel* (headman) is elected annually from amongst the assembled members who in turn appoints a ten member committee consisting of a Vice President, a Treasurer and eight

members to assist him in dealing with the socio-religious affairs of the community. The caste council has no power of imposing penalty it tries to persuade its members to abide by its decision. At places where the community is small in numbers, they affiliate themselves to the *Laskar Jamat* in which three *Pramukhs* one each from Kumbhar, Bhodala and Langha communities are selected. If there is a common problem, then elders of the neighbouring Hindu committees are also invited and their opinion is sought before arriving at any decision. Prior to Independence, they had one *Agevan* as the head of patel or *Jamahar* of different communities whose decision was final and binding on all of them. The *Laskar Jamat* and *Gram Panchayat* came into existence almost simultaneously and so they do not take the help of statutory councils in settling disputes of a social or religious nature within the community. The Patel (headman) of the community is also being nominated or selected unanimously to the local statutory councils.

Sunni sect of Islam is professed by the Bhodala community. The entire community used to worship *Savla Pir* and now they worship *Darya-e-Pir* of Mundra (who is considered a chief *pir* of the sea). Usually, before and after sailing they visit the shrine and pay Rs. 2/- to Rs. 5/- They also visit the shrines of five other *Pirs* namely Makhdoom Ibrahim, Alishah, Nana, Bewar, Achcha Bewa and Hajee Sadar Miya. Sunni sect, Sunni sect, Sunni sect, Sunni sect, Sunni sect, Sunni sect, Sunni sect, besides Hajipir for the fulfilment of desires/wishes. They employ one *Miyajee* or sacred specialist belonging to Jat/Syed to perform all the life-cycle rituals such as birth, marriage and death. All important festivals like Ramzan, Bakrid and Moharram are celebrated in accordance with Islamic traditions.

As fish eating and sea-faring community, the Bhodala maintain social and occupational relations with all neighbouring communities. They interact with other Muslim communities for ritual and religious purposes. They exchange water and food with several communities but do not accept from the Meghvals and Bhangis. Traditionally, the Mahajans do not accept food and water from their Bhodala. Depending upon the personal relations, they are allowed to sit separately in the marriage ceremonies of the Mahajan community. Similarly the Bhodala make special

arrangements for Mahajans in their functions. They are free to enter the temples, as well as panchayat building of the settlement. They maintain cordial relations with all their neighbours. A few participate in the political activities of the statutory councils at the village level.

Literacy levels among adults is almost nil. A few women have adopted birth control practices which indicates a positive trend. There is an acute scarcity of drinking water so each family is given a quota of ten gallons of water from the mobile water tank. They avail of the financial aid under the self employment scheme. Although, many Bhodala were helped with a loan of Rs. 3000/- under self-employment schemes of the government yet, very few managed to purchase fishing boats even after this or after receiving financial help from the Bombay contractors who purchase their fish. Their settlements are connected by feeder roads to the main road where State Road Transport buses ply from taluk and district headquarters. The Post Office is situated nearby although very few villages have telegraph facilities. A few of the Bhodala own transistors, a few visit cinema halls for entertainment. Quite a few have electricity in their houses. School going children enjoy the facility of mid-day meals at their primary schools. Rationing facilities are easily available. Most of them have accounts in nearby banks as they have taken loan from the Fisheries Department of the Gujarat government. A few have been benefitted by the under Sauchorasvor scheme under which Rs. 750/- as financial assistance was given besides a free plot for the construction of houses.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

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BHOI

Enthoven (1920:181) states that according to the *Jativiveka* Bhois are being called Bhai Panshtikas, i.e., they are descended from a Brahman father and Parasara mother. The Parasaras themselves are said to have descended from a Brahman father and a Shudra mother. The Bhois are broadly divided into five territorial groups namely Khandesh, Maratha, Karnatak, Kahara and Gujarati. The Bhoi migrated from Uttar Pradesh about 200 years ago. They are identified as Godia, working as agricultural labour in the houses of the Thakurs of Uttar Pradesh. After migrating to Gujarat they came to be known as Bhois and started catching fish and selling the same in local markets. Their population was 57, 904 (1901) including 29, 552 males and 28, 352 females found throughout the then Bombay presidency and Native states, chiefly on the banks of rivers (Enthoven 1920). The area where they live in Ahmadabad city is popularly known as '*Bhoiwada*'. They speak Gujarati among themselves as well as in relation to others and use the Gujarati script.

They are a non-vegetarian group who also eat pork. Their staple food consists of cereals and pulses and they also consume all various kinds of vegetables. They frequently consume alcohol, which they procure from the local market. Tea is a very common beverage which they usually have two to three times in a day. Fruits are used by the family members on special occasions only.

The Bhoi Kaharas are fishing community and are considered low in social status due to their profession which is linked with fishing or selling fish. According to them they are lower than Rajput, Baniya and Brahman, but higher than the Chamar, Bhangi and Mochi.

There are seven *jatis* (groups) among the Bhoi. These are Bhoiraj, Dhiman Zinga Bhoi or Kevat-Bhoi, Machhindra Bhoi, Paleshwar Bhoi, Kirat Bhoi, Kahar-Bhoi, Parbishin Bhoi and Shrimali Bhoi etc. All the seven *Jatis* are endogamous in nature.

The Bhoi now practise adult marriages. The marriage age for

girls is 15 to 20 years and for boys it is 18-21 years. Marriage is settled through negotiations. Monogamy is the common form. Sororal polygyny is also practised among them. *Ghar-jamai* marriage is found among them. *Sindhur churi* are the symbols of married woman. The system of bride-price is prevalent among them. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilineal. Both divorce and remarriage are permitted in their society for both males and females. Reasons for divorce are maladjustment, adultery, impotence and barrenness of wife.

The nuclear type of family is the predominant norm in their society. Extended and broken families also exist. Women keep *Purda* (veils) with husband's, elder brothers. They have joking relations with the younger siblings of the husband and that of wife in a reciprocal basis. Rules of inheritance of property follows male equigeniture. Succession pattern follows the male lines. Inter-family linkages are cordial. Members of family work together to build the family economy and to maintain its status.

The status of Bhoi women is low. However she has a say as far as managing family affairs is concerned. They have no right to hold the property or inherit the same. They contribute to the family income. While males catch fish in ponds the women sell it in the local market.

The Bhoi observe birth, marriage and death rituals. *Nai Chapai*, is held on the day of birth. A Nai (barber) visit the house with his instruments and those are touched to the child and the mother. The touch of a Nai is considered pure. They observe *chhatti* on the sixth day after the birth of the child during which they worship their family deity and sweets are distributed. On the twelfth day, the child is taken out (*bahyar nikalna*) after a bath. Pollution for mother is observed for forty days or one and quarter month.

Marriage ceremony starts with *Sagai* (betrothal) This is fixed by a *pandit* and celebrated in the *Sukla paksha* (bright half) where as the *lagan* is celebrated during *Krishna paksha* (dark half). In *Sagai*, the father of the bridegroom alongwith relatives, goes to the house of the bride and give some presents to the bride. In the bridegroom's house, a community feast is arranged on this day and the date of marriage is declared. Assembled relatives offer some gifts to the bridegroom. Three day before the marriage, *Haldi*, or *pithi ceremony* is performed in which turmeric paste is

anointed to bride and bridegroom. During these days, women sing songs at night. The *Barat* or *jan* (groom's party) goes to bride's house. *Patli fera* and *phera* are main rituals of the ceremony. *Patli-fera*, i. e. exchange of sitting place is done if girl is an adult. If she is a child then *patli fera* is performed after she attains puberty. *Phera* (Circumambulation of the sacred fire) is performed by the bride and bridegroom for four times. On the second day, the parents and relatives of the bride and bridegroom eat together, which is called *Annu-tanmu*. The bride goes to her husband's house and returns within five days. She goes back after three days and stays permanently in the house of her in-laws. In case of minor bride she is sent to her in-laws house only after she attains puberty and after the performance of *gaona*. Consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's house.

The Bhois cremate their dead except in the case of child and pregnant woman, where the dead bodies are buried. After three days they practice *vija*. On this day they go to the cremation ground and pour water over the pyre. A lighted earthen lamp is put there in the name of dead. They observe *Sradha* (funeral rite) on twelfth day and offer a feast to their community members. In the fourth month they observe *thipamka* and in the sixth month they observe *chamai*; and the *barami* (first anniversary). During those days they pay homage to their ancestors.

The Bhois are a community of fisherfolk. They catch fish from the ponds and rivers and sell the same in the local market. They get licences from the fishery authorities. They are permitted to catch 500 fish from the ponds and rivers which they catch on contract. Children below fifteen years also actively participate in catching fish. They spend whole day or entire night in catching fish and supply to the fishing department or sell in the local market. Selling of fish is done by women folk. Still almost all continue their traditional occupation.

They Bhoi have traditional caste panchayat i.e. *Bhoi Samaj*. It is a regional association and is active only in Ahmedabad area. The *Jati* panchayat has a President, Secretary and executive members of the community. This controls and regulates socio-religious matters, i. e. marriage, divorce, re-marriage and community rituals. This *Jati* Panchayat has the authority to impose a fine and also ex-communicate a person from the community.

They have no representative in panchayat or in any statutory councils.

The Bhois are Hindus and as such they believe in Hindu gods and goddesses but *Nathu-baba* is considered to be their community god. They worship *Nathu baba* on the days of the *Ashara* (falling in July in every 3 years). To perform the worship of *Nathu baba* by themselves, every family contributes to worship him. They also worship *Baba Zore* every year. He is considered to be god a of flood and devastation. Family head is supposed to do the *Puja*. They partake all regional Hindu fairs and festivals.

Inter — community linkages are maintained with other communities. As they sell fish in the market, they have to come across in contact with various communities from Hindus, Muslims and even Christians. In the past, they worked under the Thakurs of Uttar Pradesh as agricultural workers and they did the occupation of catching fish as a subsidiary occupation. They have no marriage alliance with other communities.

The area where they live is either dominated by themselves or by other caste groups. Facilities of school, crematorium etc. are shared with others. They have accepted family planning programme. Drinking water and other facilities of modern telecommunication, media, and transportation are availed of. They avail of the facilities of public distribution system. Bank facilities are also availed of by them.

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BOHRA/ALIVI

The Alivi Bohras describe themselves initially as Ismailis, then as the Muste *Aliam Branch* of Ismailis, then as Bohras and are now known as Alivi Bohras. The Alivi Bohra community is also known as the Alivi Davat. The *Dai* (religious head) is said to be the direct descendant of prophet. The present Dai is the 44th in the line of succession. All the three Shia Bohras, namely Daudi, Sulaimani and Alivi had common Dais in a sequence upto twenty six, while the Alivi and Daudi Bohras accepting a common *Dai* upto 28th in the succession. The community of Alivi Bohras was formed in 1624 A.D. when Ali, a grandson of Syedna Sahikh Adam Safuddin, the 28th *Dai*, was bypassed in the appointment as 29th Dai. He then started a new sect called Alivi Bohras. They are the smallest group among the Bohras. They are distributed in Baroda, Nadiad, Kalol, Halol of PanchMahal district, Ahmedabad city, Bharuch town. The Alivi Bohras speak Gujarati, with an admixture of Urdu words. Gujarati script is used. Many speak urdu and Hindi. The ladies wear *ghaghra* (petti coat) and blouse and *odhna* (half saree used to cover upper portion of the body) embroidered with feeth (four borders) as the lower outer garment, upper garments and head dress respectively. The women wear another concealing garb.

The Alivi Bohra are non-vegetarian, eating mutton but abstain from beef and rice is the common cereal they take. *Khitchadi palida* (prepared out of Chana or wheat flour with vegetable) is the staple food. They take meals thrice a day. *Tuvar*, *chana* are the most commonly used pulses. Groundnut oil is used as cooking medium. Eating of *hing* (asafoetida), *suran* (yam) and yellow coloured roots are taboo among the Alivi community. All available fruits are eaten. *Sheer-kurma*, *savia* are the sweets consumed during festivals.

The community has surnames like Cheenwala, Barodawala Bombaywala, Cheeniwala based on occupation or after the name of town/city they hailed. They believe in equality.

Marriages are performed at *Dharamgurus'* (Dai) house. The first cousin of all the four types followed by near relatives are preferred as marriage partners. The age of marriage varies from 21 to 30 years for both girls and boys. A fixed sum of Rs. 500/- is paid towards *mehar* before *nikah* ceremony. Alliances are negotiated by the respective parents/elders and even marriage by mutual consent is also approved. Monogamy is the common form of marriage practised by them. Divorce is allowed for which permission of the *Dai* is essential. Remarriage is allowed for divorcee, widow as well as widower. Junior levirate and Junior Sororate are also allowed.

Nuclear families followed by a few extended joint families, are most prevalent. All sons and daughters have a right of inheritance though not strictly according to the Shariat. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family on the death of his father. Inter-family linkages are also cordial and they take the help of family elders or *Mazun* in finding solutions to their problems.

The Alivi Bohra woman enjoys low status. She has the right of inheritance in her father's property and gets all the belongings of mother on her death. She has a say in social activities. She plays a vital role in the rituals of the community. She plays no role in the political sphere. The girls start learning embroidery and tailoring after primary level of education and they contribute to family's income.

On the occasion of the first child birth a ritual called *kholabharna* is observed in the seventh month of pregnancy. The expectant mother is presented with sweets and clothes brought by her parents and she is taken to the natal home for delivery. Delivery takes place in nursing home. The mother is treated as unclean for forty days. The child is given its name on the seventh or fourteenth day by one's *fui* (father's sister) in a ceremony called *chhati*. Quite a few perform *Aqiqa* alongwith naming ceremony or on twenty first day after birth. Circumcision of both boy and girl is performed mostly by a *Hazam* when the child is three month's old. They perform *makhtab* before sending the child to *Madrasa* (religious school) and school simultaneously. In the age range of 14-15 years, both boys and girls have to undertake an oath of allegiance called *misac* on any day preferably Monday or Friday which is a declaration of their submission to Allah, the Almighty.

through the Dai after he/she is considered a full fledged member of the community. Everyone has to undergo renewal of *misac* preferably on 18th of *zulttaz* (i.e. last month of lunar year).

Marriage alliances are initiated by the groom's father once the negotiation is final the boy and girl are allowed to meet for a few hours. *Sharbatpeena* (engagement) is performed in which two elders from groom's family visit the girl's house, present Rs. 201 and fix the date for marriage. Marriage is usually solemnised within six months and tili then the engaged couple is allowed to move freely. The Nikah is performed at Syenda's house around 5 p.m to 6 p.m. A feast is arranged by the groom's party. Nuptial takes place at the groom's house.

The dead are buried within a few hours except when death occurs after 9 p.m. Mourning is observed till the performance of *Ziarat* on third day in which the assembled relatives visit grave yard to pray for the departed soul. After morning prayer and recitation of holy Quran, *Dasmi*, *Chalismi*, *Chaemasi* and *Barasee* (on tenth, fortieth, six month and anniversary) are performed in a very simple manner by serving one or two spoons of kheer (sweet) to the assembled relatives/friends.

The Alivi Bohras are an urban community. Their traditional occupation was that of *zari* (embroidery) which they did for the Gaekwad, and royal family of Baroda. The embroidering work is now confined to the caps worn by the Bohra males. Largely they are self-employed. They operate small scale engineering and fabrication units for metal products. They are in the business of selling as well and have a monopoly of the trade in spectacle frames. Service in government and semi-government offices is the secondary means of income. They depend on local markets for all their day-to-day needs. Wages are paid in cash.

There is the *Jamathe Hadiya* consisting of seven, nine or eleven members and the membership is on a rotational basis. This is a trust headed by Syedna who is the supreme chief of the community. The position of Syedna is hereditary. He is assisted by one of his sons called *Mazun* (Deputy chief) who succeeds on the death of Syedna. The sons of the *Mazun* were earlier called *Bhaisahebs*, but now-a-days they prefer to call themselves *Shehajada* (prince). There are also two or three *Mullas* (sacred specialist) to lead daily prayers of the community. Mullas are paid

an honorarium. *Zakat* (2.5 % tax on annual income of individual) *fitra*, *bikaha*, *hakkum nafas* (death tax) *nazarana* (personal call tax) and *Nazeranamukam* (personal gifts depending on the profit one makes in business) and *Misac* gifts are the sources of income of the *Syedna*. The entire community assemble after morning prayer on the first day of lunar calendar and review the activities and problems faced by the community. The offenders are persuaded to accept the decision of the *Sydena* or the *Mazum*.

The Alivi Bohras are Shia Muslims belonging to the Masta Alivi sect of the Islamics. While the Mullas lead prayers in connection with the marriage ceremony, all funeral rituals are conducted by the *Sydena* in Baroda and the *Mazun* in Bombay. The *Sydena* also officiates on the occasion of Muharram and atleast one full recitation of the Quran is done in the month of Ramzan. In addition to celebrating Ramzan, Bakrid and Moharram they also observe Id-e-Gadirelkhum (the day when Prophet gave his last sermon and declared Hazarat Ali as his successor).

The Alivi Bohras interact with several communities at the social and occupational level as traders. They have close relations with other Shia sects. Very few cases of inter-community and inter-religious marriages have been reported in the community and although they share civic amenities and schools with others they have separate graveyards. In their business establishments they have cordial relations with their workers.

The level of literacy is moderate. A majority of boys and girls complete high school. There are doctors, engineers and some lawyers among them. They prefer to avail of modern medical and health care. They believe in limiting the size of the family and adopt measures of family planning through religious methods of self-restraint. Alivi Bohras seldom have more than three children. Alivi Bohras being largely self-employed enjoy a decent standard of living. They educate their children in English medium schools and avail of public entertainment. All of them have savings Bank accounts in public sector as well as co-operative bank. They provide employment mainly to members of their own community.

The community has a few registered voluntary organisations such as in Baroda, which provide educational assistance and financial aid at low rate of interest to the members of the community in the form of free books upto college level and also

fees to some extent. Another organisation called Alivi Bachchath Yojana Mandal in Bombay provides loan upto Rs. 10,000/- on nominal interest to needy members.

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BOHRA/DAUDI

The term Bohra or Vora is a corrupt form of *vehru* meaning trade. They are Shiaite Muslim. Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency (1899) says that. On the death of the sixth Imam, two sects emerged, viz. Nizari or Agakhani sect and Ismaili sect. Agakhanis believe in the continuation of Imam system but Bohras believe in *Dai-Ul-Mutlag* (representative of *dai* who is being guided by *Imam* in disguise) after 21st Imam. According to the account given by Hussain (1929) of Daudi Bohras, Sunni Bohras sect has originated in 494 AD founded by Syedna Ali, son of 18th Dai. Those who accepted Dawood Biri Qutubsha as the 27th Dai (religious head) are called Daudi Bohra. The origin of Daudi Bohras can be traced to the time before the death of 18th Imam Mustansir Billah when two missionaries Ahmed and Abdulla arrived in 1067 AD at Cambay port. At that time Siddharaj Jaising ruled over Patan. Abdulla a man of great learning performed miracles and won the heart of masses and the Hindu rulers of the Cambay and Patan and converted many people. However, the new faith was maintained secretly due to continuous persecution by the Sunni Mohammaden rulers. It began to spread with the advent of British rule in the second half of eighteenth century. They are mainly distributed in the districts of Ahmedabad, Surat, Jamnagar, Banaskantha and Panchmahal. They speak in Kachchi dialect and use Gujarati script; a few males speak Hindi also. The males wear a round embroidered *topi* (cap). Traditionally the women also wore calf-length loose pyjama called *Izar* under *ghaghra* besides another concealing garb called *rida*. Wearing of *rida* is compulsory while attending the *Jamat* function or community gatherings. The Daudi Bohra is the largest Shia sect of the Muslim minority amongst the three endogamous Bohra communities under the Musta Alian branch of Ismailies.

The Daudi Bohra community is non-vegetarian. Wheat, *bajri* and rice are the cereals commonly eaten. Pulses like *Moong* and *chana* are consumed. Groundnut oil is used for cooking. They

also eat groundnut and mustard oil seeds, and available vegetables and fruits. They consume mostly butter milk. Home made sweets like *sheera*, *sois* are eaten during festive occasions.

They have several surnames like Darugar, Lakadwala, Lokhandwala, Tinwala, Sakharla, Vajelan, Halai etc. named after occupation of their ancestors, Meghwal, Me Koli and other such communities are considered inferior to them in local social hierarchy.

Marriages are performed as per *Shariat* in which first – cousin marriages, cross and parallel are preferred. The age at marriage varies from 19 years to 21 years and from 24 years to 30 years for girls and boys respectively. Parents arrange marriages. Monogamy is the main form although polygyny is allowed. A widowed woman does not wear glass bangles. The father of the bride gives some ornaments, household utensils and some clothes to his daughter as gifts. They follow patrilocal residence after marriage. Divorce is practised only if there is no scope for compromise between the spouses. *Jamat* settles cases of divorce. An amount is to be paid as *Meher* before the commencement of *Nikah* ceremony. Widow remarriage is allowed. Generally a widow marries outside the deceased husband's family.

Nuclear family is the most prevalent form. Joint families are very few and they are also breaking up due to lack of space and attraction of independent living. Both son and daughter inherit the ancestral property. The eldest son succeeds as head of the household on the death of his father. They have good (brethren) relations not only among different families but also with all the community members.

The Daudi Bohra women enjoy equal status. Her advice is sought in most of the social and religious activities. She participates actively in rituals of household and community but has little role in politics. They work as telephone operators, primary school teachers or earn a living through tailoring or embroidery. Domestic duties, proper upbringing of the children and attending to the requirements of the household members are the prime responsibilities of a woman.

'*Kholo-bharna*' ceremony is performed on completion of her seven months of first pregnancy. She is presented with clothes and sweets and taken to her mother's house. The delivery (Father's)

takes place at the hospital or nursing home. The mother is considered impure for forty days. The Fui (father's) names the child on sixth day after birth. They perform *sunnat* (circumcision) and *Aqiqah* of the boy on fourteenth or twenty first day of birth and circumcision of a girl is done by a female Hazam, when she is five to six years old. All boys and girls take *Misac* (oath of allegiance) when they are ten to eleven years of age in order to become full fledged members of the community.

Marriage alliance is initiated by middle-man on behalf of the groom's father. *Sagai* (betrothal) ceremony is carried-out by presenting a pair of clothes and one or two ornaments to the bride. Marriage is solemnized within a year of *sagai*. Both bride and groom are anointed with *turmeric* by their respective sisters and other near female relatives over two to three days preceding the night of *Nikah*. A night before *Nikah*, all their dearest and nearest kins and friends assemble at both the bride and groom's house to hear *mudaha* (religious discourse in praise of Moula Ali and Dayi performed by *Valimulla* or *Janab*). *Nikah* takes place between 10 PM to 12'O clock in which *Valima dawat* (feast) is arranged by the family of the groom. Similarly a feast is given by the bride's family after *Nikah*. Nuptial takes place at the groom's house on the same night.

The dead are buried within four hours of death. Mourning is observed for three days i.e. no food is prepared till the performance of *Ziarat*. *Naumiya* (ninth day) and *Masiya* are performed by a few. On the thirtieth day a ceremony is performed in which near kin take part by offering *Fateha*. *Chalisma* is performed on fortieth day of death by visiting the grave-yard and by later giving a feast to the assembled. All the males in the household visit the graveyard every Friday morning till *Chalisma* is performed. *Barasee* (anniversary) is also performed exactly after one year of death.

They are traders and dealing in iron, wood and paints. Jobs are a subsidiary source of income. There is no change in the traditional occupation of the community. A few people are employed in government jobs. All the transactions are made cash. Almost all of them live in urban centres and depend on their respective local markets for daily requirements.

The community has a systematic and well organised *Jamat* (caste council) at local level to deal with their day-to-day socio-

religious and economic affairs. Members of these councils is renewed every year. They have *Janab* (representative of the *Dai*) at regional level without whose permission, no life-cycle rituals like the ones on marriage or death can be carried out. He has the power to impose social boycott of those violating its traditional norms. Intra-community disputes are also settled by him. He is answerable to *Dai* or his deputy called *Mazum*. *Dai-ul-mutlag*, popularly called *Mullaji* is the supreme authority in all secular and spiritual matters of the community.

A dissident group consisting of educated people by the name of *pragatisheel Bohras* was formed on the issue of succession of 47th *Dai*. According to them the succession was not in accordance with traditional norms and the case called *Burhanpur Darga* - case was referred and settled by privy council, London. They have no objection in accepting the supreme authority of *Dai*, but they want local *Zamats* to be formed on the basis of elections. They want more freedom in matters of marriage or death rites and the *Zakat* (wealth tax), amount to be spent for welfare. *Pragatisheel Bohras* are mostly found in Ahmedabad, Jamnagar and Surat.

The Daudi Bohras belong to the Shia sect of Islam. The *Dai* is highly respected and regarded as a living *pir* (saint). They do not visit any Sunni Muslim shrines. They undertake the *Haj* pilgrimage. They have *Mullasab* (sacred specialist) to lead daily prayers and *Valeemulla* for the performances of death rite. But *Nikah* ceremony is carried out by *Janabsab* (regional sacred specialist). They observe *Ramzan*, *Bakrid*, *Shabe- Barat*, *Milad Ul Nabi* festivals. They also celebrate the birthday and anniversary of the existing and last *Dai* of the community. Besides paying *Zakat* to the *Mullaji* they also pay some amount towards *Salams* (wish) to the secluded Imam called, *Silafitra* and *Sahil* (*Jamat*) tax before performing marriage which is fixed on the basis of turnover of business. The *Mullaji* or *Aamil* also receives some amount they call on him before initiating any work which is called *Nazar Mugam*. They pay some amount to the *Mullaji* for his *Rukku Chitti* (recommendation letter) at the time of burial. The sacred specialist collects compensation from the guilty person for relieving him from the sin committed called *Kapharath*.

As traders, they have socio-economic relations with all the communities. Inter-community marriages are hardly reported. They

have separate graveyard but school and drinking water facilities are shared with others.

The level of literacy is quite high among them and the Girls go in for higher study upto the graduation level. They favour modern medical and health care. They believe in self control as the best method of birth control rather than adopting family welfare programmes. Almost all their have the facility of drinking water and electricity. They contribute Rs. 1/- to Rs. 5/- per day and the amount is given as loan to the needy members of the community.

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BOHRA/SULAIMANI

The community is named after the *Dai*. The 26th *Dai* Syedna Daud sent (religious head) one person by name Suleman from India to Yamen as his representative. He nominated Burhanuddin II, son of Kutubhshaha as 27th *Dai* before his death in 1588 A.D. But Suleman rejected this nomination and claimed himself as 27th *Dai* on grounds of a letter from the 26th *Dai* and obtained a following of large numbers in Yeman beside some from India who became known as Sulaimania in 1591 A.D. in Yeman. (Abdul Hussain, 1920).

They are distributed in Baroda, Surat and Ahmedabad cities as well as in Rajpipla town of Bharuch district. The Sulaimani Bohra speak Urdu among themselves but use Gujarati with outsiders. They use both Urdu and Gujarati scripts. The traditional dress of Sulaimani Bohra women continues to vary from other two groups of Bohras. The women wear half length *pyjama* called *izar* as lower undergarment besides wearing another concealing garb called *rida* which has been given up. Now, they wear as lower outer garment, without gather and somewhat thick violet (mul mul) of white coloured cloth called *kurta* as upper garment and *odhni* (head dress). They are one of the smallest Shia Muslims classed under religious minorities of India. Men use pant and bush shirts or shirts and also *pyjama* and *Kurta*.

The Sulaimani community is non-vegetarian in its food habits. As beef or meat of buffalo is not available, they take meat of sheep or goat. Eggs and chicken and fish are also taken. *Chana*, *tur* are the pulses they consume. Wheat is the common cereal. Taking of *suran* (yarn) and *mushroom* is a taboo. They take rest of all the vegetables and fruits available in the market. Groundnut oil is used as cooking medium. They take *sevai* and other home made sweets of milk during festive occasions.

The Sulaimani have surnames like Hakeem, Sidhpurwala etc, on the basis of occupation or first place of residence of their ancestors. They consider themselves at par with other communities

but admit that are placed after those Hindu communities who are placed high, like Brahmans in local social hierarchy.

Marriages are performed in accordance with *Shariat*. First cousins are preferred. Girls and boys are generally married off at the age ranging between 16-25 years and 21-30 years respectively. Parents negotiate the marriage. Black bead *lachcha* (necklace) and glass-bangles are considered as symbols of married women. A sum of Rs. 200/- instead of Rs. 40/- is paid in cash towards *meher* before the commencement of the *nikah*. They follow patrilocal residence after marriage. Divorce is permitted. In case of divorce, children are the liabilities of father. Remarriage of widow/widower and divorcee are allowed. Junior sororate is also allowed.

Nuclear form of the family is most prevalent, followed by vertical or extended-joint type of families. Both sons and daughters inherit ancestral property. Eldest son succeeds as head of the household on the death of his father.

The Sulaimani Bohra women have low status. She has a saying in the social and family matters. She has no role in the politics. She contributes to the family income by doing tailoring, embroidery and by working as teachers.

The parents of the pregnant woman take her to their house and arrange everything during her first delivery. Delivery takes place in hospital or in private nursing homes. The mother is treated unclean for forty days. *Fui* (FaSi) gives name to the child on the seventh day of the birth in a simple ceremony called *chhatti* and also performs *Aquqa* simultaneously or else on fourteenth or twentyfirst day. After the completion of three years of the child he or she is sent to a *Madrasa* (religious school) to obtain a knowledge of religious scriptures. Circumcision is done by the *Hazam* (barber).

The marriage alliances are fixed by negotiation. When both the parties agree, boy and his parents and nearest kin visit girl's house where boy and girl exchange gold ring in the presence of assembled elders. This ceremony is called *magani*. They are allowed to move freely after this till marriage. The female relatives and bride decorate their hands and feet with *mehandi*. Both bride and groom are anointed with turmeric paste on marriage day, which is called *haldi lagana*. *Nikah* takes place after *isha-namaj* (night prayer). Nuptial ceremony is arranged on the night of *nikah* in the groom's house.

The dead are buried within a few hours of death. Dead body of a married woman is covered with coloured cloth after wrapping up in white cloth. *Janaja* (coffin box) is covered with black cloth. Mourning is observed for three days i.e. till *ziarat*. They read the holy Quran under the guidance of *Mollahji* and visit the grave yard to pray for the peace of the departed soul on fortieth day, in a ceremony called *chehalam* which is the concluding funeral rite.

The Sulaimani are a trading community dealing in hardware, cutlery and cloth. The primary and traditional occupations remains the same. Service is considered as secondary source of livelihood. All the economic activities are measured in terms of cash. They depend on the highly organised local markets for their daily requirements.

The Sulaimani have *Dai*, as its supreme spiritual leader who lives in Nazran city of Saudi Arabia. The *Mansoob* (representative of *Dail*) in consultation with *Dai* appoints local *jamat* headed by an *aamil*. The posts are not hereditary. Only qualified persons are appointed as *Dai*, *Mansoob* and *Aamil* or *Mollah*. The *Mollah* with the help of his assistants i.e. junior *Mullah* or other community elders solve disputes/social problems like divorce cases of the community. The approval of a *Mansoob* is a must for divorce cases. Guilty has to pay cash the called *kaffara*. For minor mistakes committed, one has to observe *roza* (fast).

Shia sect of Islam is the religion professed by the Sulaimani. They follow the doctrine of the Fatima school. They also visit the shrines where Daudi Bohras also do visit. They undertake *haz* pilgrimage. They have *Mollah* (sacred specialist) to lead *namaj* (prayer) and for the performance of all life — cycle rituals. Ramjan, Bakri-Id and Moharram are the main festivals of the community. They observe fast during Ramjan.

The Sulaimani inter-act among themselves and to some extent with other Shia Muslims for ritual and religious activities. They accept food and water from all the communities. The caste Hindus who are considered higher do not accept water/food from the Sulaimani. They have separate grave-yard. However; they share drinking water and such facilities with neighbouring communities. There are a few famous personalities at national level from amongst the Sulaimani community. They prefer to employ their own community members.

The level of literacy is moderate. There are graduates even among the female members also. They avail of modern medical facilities. They adopt self-control instead of undergoing family planning operations. Most of the members are unaware of self-employment schemes. They take loans from Sulaimani Co-operative Bank of Baroda. Most of them have savings bank account in nearby public sector banks. All the houses are having drinking and electric connections. They are an urban group and avail of all the urban amenities.

They have their own musafir Khana (guest house) in large cities which provides free boarding and lodging to the members. A quarterly magazine in Urdu is published, which contains all important activities of the community.

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BOHRA/SUNNI

The Sunni Vohra call themselves Qazi in Saurashtra region and Bowehis Jand Patni in south Gujarat. The word Bowehi was later corrupted to Bohara and then to Vora in course of time. Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency (1899) discusses that about 800 years ago, a few Arab traders with some Muslim saint from Kupha city of Iraq came to Rander, which was a big port then. The local population comprising of Brahmans, Surango and Jains embraced Islam under the influence of these saints. *Khoumae Bawchias* means community of businessmen in Arabic language. These visiting traders took girls from the local converted Brahmans and Jains and settled at Rander and Cambay. A section migrated and settled at Patan which was being ruled by Siddaraj Jaysing and in course of time they came to be known as Patni Vohra. A few of them who settled down in the region of Tapi river and Vapi town of Valsad district are called Kanamia Vora and Surti Sunni respectively. According to the account of the Shia Bohras Jaffar, after returning from Yemen in 494 AD started leading prayer meetings without the necessary sanction/approval of the chief priest who resided in Ahmedabad. He not only adopted Sunni sect but went to Patan and converted many Ismaili Bohras to Sunnism under the patronage of a local Muslim ruler. On the basis of territory, they have three endogamous divisions namely Surti Vohra, Patni Vohra and Kanamia Vohra. There are three subgroups among the Kanamia group on the basis of territories again. They speak Gujarati at home, with kin group as well as with others. They use Gujaratis script.

They are non-vegetarian. Meat of sheep, goat, eggs, fish and chicken are commonly consumed. Some take the meat of she-buffaloe. Wheat and rice is the staple food. Very few take *bajri-roti*. *Tur*, *chana*, *urad* and *moong* are the pulses being used. All the vegetables, roots, tubers and fruits available in the market are eaten. Ground nut oil is used as cooking medium. *Sheet*

Kurma and *Saisa* are the most common sweets taken during festive occasions.

There are three endogamous divisions among the Sunni Bohra. Each division consists of number of *ataks* (clans) like Unia, Patel, Mathola, Makba, Dadbhoy, Kazi, Alloo, Bhayot, Surti, Bham etc. The term Patel is suffixed to name by them. These indicate one's ancestry. The community consider themselves at par with all the communities but admit that in the local social hierarchy, they are placed after the Brahmans, Banias and Patel.

The marriage age ranges from 17-20 and 22-26 of age for girls and boys respectively. Although marriages are arranged by parents, the selection of spouse is done by the boy. They pay- *mehar*, the amount of which varies from place to place. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriage. Divorce is permissible on ground of mal-adjustment between the spouses. Remarriage of a divorcee and both widow and widower is allowed. Children are responsibility of the husband after divorce. During the last twenty years, a gradual reduction in the marriage expenditure has been reported.

Joint family is most dominant type found among them. Both sons and daughters have inheritance right in the ancestral property. The eldest son succeeds the father.

The woman has right of inheritance. In many social issues of the family, her advice is obtained. She has almost equal rights in religious and ritual activities. However, she has little role in the contribution to family income. In majority of the cases, she remains confined to the four walls of her home.

Kholobharna is observed during the seventh month of first pregnancy by presenting new clothes. Delivery takes place in hospitals. The mother is to observe a period of pollution for forty days. *Aza* is chanted and murmured into the right and left ear of the child within 24 hours of birth. This is performed by any paternal male kin. The child is given a name on *Chhathi* i.e. the sixth day by maternal grand mother or parental grand father or even by the father himself. *Sunnath* (circumcision) is performed before a male child attains one year of age. *Aqiqa* ceremony is observed before marriage. The marriage alliance is initiated by the groom's father and after both the parties agree a simple betrothal ceremony is performed by presenting one or two tollas of gold and a pair of clothes to the bride by the relatives of the boy. Marriage

is solemnized at the bride's house. *Nikah* takes place around 3 PM after *Johar Namaj* (Afternoon prayer). After giving a feast to kin and relatives, the bride is taken to her in-law's house for the performance of nuptial ceremony. *Valima* is performed by groom's party on the very next day of *Nikah*.

The dead are buried within eight hours of death in accordance with Islamic traditions so that message can be sent to near and dear relatives/friends. After *Zanana Namaz*, they are fed. No ceremonies like *Ziarat*, *Dasma*, *Beesma* or *Chalisma* are observed among the Surti Sunni Vohras. Curtailing of rituals to incur less expenditure under the impact of *Tableeka zamat* among a few Surti Sunni and many Kanamia Sunni Vohras of Bharuch district is the change reported in the performance of life-cycle rituals.

Land is the major economic resource for Kanamia Bohra who still retain traditional occupation of cultivation. Trade in food grains, building material, etc. and general *merchandise* are the traditional as well as the primary source of livelihood. Very few are employed in government/semi-government institutions. They depend on the well organised market and all the economic transactions are measured in terms of cash.

The Surti-Sunni Vohras has a well organized registered society called '*The Surti Sunni Vohra Muslim Education Society*,' in Surat. It was established in 1948-49 with the aim of providing scholarship to the needy poor boys from VIII standard onwards to college level imparting technical education, scholarships to those who are learning Motor driving, tailoring, ITI Courses. It also gives annual financial assistance to the poor helpless widows of the community and medical aid to needy persons. The society has various subcommittees. It consists of 9 members executive committee. Board of council has also been constituted which has 61 members consisting of 22 village members. It collects donation from the community members during Ramzaan month in the form of *Fitra* and *Zakat*. At Rander they have a registered committee under the name of '*Rander Sunni Vora Jamat*'. This manages ceremonies like marriage, death and to help poor and needy people of the community. The other two divisions also have such bodies.

Sunni sect of Islam is the religion professed by the community. Some of them go to Ajmer on pilgrimage. But Kanamia Voras have faith in *pir* and *mureed* system. Many of them undertake *Haj*

Pilgrimage. Syed is employed as sacred specialist for spiritual guidance as well as for the performance of life and death rites. Several of them observe fast during holy Ramzan month and celebrate all the major festivals like Ramzan, Bakreed, Moharram etc. The impact of Tableek Zamat is more on the Kanamia Vohras. As a result of this for the last twenty years, all the three groups of Kanamia Vohra have been inter-marrying.

They interact among themselves and with other communities as businessmen or farmers. Upper caste Hindu, i.e. those considered upper by others in the local social hierarchy and Jains do not accept or exchange food and water with them. They have separate grave-yard. Drinking water facilities and road and school facilities, entry to places of worship, public offices like panchayat ghar etc. are being shared with other communities. They take active role in local, state and even national level politics. There are several community members holding white-collar jobs.

The rate of literacy is moderate among the male members but poor among the female members of the community. They favour modern medical and health facilities. Mainly they believe in self-control for avoiding conception. Some women have been operated under family welfare programme. They are aware of IRDP and self-employment schemes. The modern communication facilities are available to them. Quite a few houses have electric facilities. Very few have irrigation facilities. They form co-operative society and take loans from multi-purpose societies. Use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is common. Mid-day meal scheme is being enjoyed by their school going children. Very few take loans from Banks. A few Sunni Vohra who have been doing trade in countries like Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mauritius spend money in the construction of mosques and give donations to run *madrāsas* (religious schools). A gymkhana and hostel are run at Rander with the donations they receive from the Surati Sunni Vohras who are settled abroad.

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BORPI

The community refers itself as Bōrpi. They are also known as Borpa, Bopi and Naowale. Dharampur taluka of valsad district is regarded as their original habitat. Their distribution is restricted to the banks of the rivers Auramga and Par of valsad district. They speak the Borpi dialect which is akin to Konkani within the kin group while communicating with others others they speak in Gujarati language and script.

The Borpis are non-vegetarian. Their staple food is rice and *jowar*. They consume a variety of pulses and grams such as *tur* and *masur* etc. They use groundnut oil as the cooking medium. Vegetables, roots and tubers that are locally available are also part of their diet. Milk is rarely drunk and tea irrerregularly but they are habituated to liquor which they either brew themselves or buy in the open market. Women are also addicted to it. Almost all drink during festive and ceremonial occasions. Both males and females smoke *bidi* or country made cigarettes.

The Borpis have a number of exogamous divisions known as *sakhs* (clans) such as Hudiya, Kotiya, Boy, Surya Rahad, Bhaskar, Dared, Hadad, Tumbda, Soley, Huvana, More, Kakowa, Vadu, Deshmukh, Sonar characterized by total absence of any hierarchy amongst them. These divisions mainly regulate marriage alliances and in recent times, they have started using the clan name as the surname. They perceive themselves to be of low status in the local social hierarchy, a perception with which neighbouring communities agree.

The Borpis are an endogmaous group following the rule of cross-cousin marriages with the daughter's of one's mother's brother and that of the father's sister. Parallel-cousin marriages are prohibited. Sororate (junior) marriage is allowed. Girls are married on attaining puberty but in some cases even prior to that. Marital alliances are negotiated by parents or elders. Monogamy is the present practice with *kanku* (red ochre) on the forehead being the symbol of married status for woman. A system

of bride-price is prevalent depending on the financial condition of the party concerned. Residence after marriage is patrilocal but after some period, the couple establish a new residence for themselves. Divorce is permitted locally called *chhuta chheda*. Both male and female may seek divorce. Children become the liability of the mother in such cases. Remarriage of widow, widower, male and female divorcees are permissible. Remarriage of a widow called *natru* is performed without any elaborate ceremony. An increase in the age of marriage is noticed in recent times. The incidence of divorce is however on the decline.

A large majority of the Borpis live nuclear families though mixed extended type of families are also found. Inter-family and inter-personal relations are maintained cordially. Joking relationships exist among certain family members such with the younger brother of the woman's husband and between grand parents and grand children. Avoidance relationships are maintained between daughter-in-law and father-in-law and between sister-in-law and elder brother-in-law. On issues of property distribution conflicts arise between family members. Rules of inheritance are based on male equigeniture with the eldest son succeeding to authority in the family.

The Borpi women take active part in agricultural operation and fishing activities and thus contribute to the family income. Their household duties include collection of fuel, fetching potable water, and cooking food. They have no right of inheritance; neither enjoy decision making powers. They do participate in ritual and religious functions but have no role in the mechanisms of social control or in politics. Women are fond of decorating their bodies with tattoo designs.

The expectant mother is relieved from hard manual work. Delivery takes place in the house itself assisted by a mid-wife from the community. The *orr* (placenta) is buried in the back-yard of the house. Birth pollution lasts for about five weeks after delivery. On the sixth day after birth they perform *chhatti puja* when both mother and the child bathe and *gur* or (jaggery) is distributed amongst the children. The naming of the child takes place on the same day. *Mundan* (tonsure) ceremony is observed for both boys and girls.

Marriage is preceded by *magni* which marks the final settlement

of the alliance after which a date is fixed for the marriage *sadi*. Three days before the marriage, *pithi* ceremony takes place in which both bride and groom's bodies are anointed with a paste of turmeric and groundnut oil by their respective maternal aunts, elder sister and sisters-in-law. The marriage takes place at the bride's residence. A *mandavo* (marriage booth) is erected in front of the house. The groom accompanied by his relatives including women who sing on the way to the venue of the wedding arrive there in a procession called the *jan*. A Brahman priest solemnises the marriage in the present while in the past, senior members of the community conducted marriage rituals. All assembled kin are offered *daru* (country liquor) which is followed by a feast. The departure of the bride next morning is called *bidai*. The bride's father bears the entire expenditure of the marriage feast. The bride price is given at the time of marriage. The consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's residence and recent tendency has been for to be marriage rituals shortened.

The Borpis cremate the dead. Close relatives and neighbours carry the dead body to the cremation ground. The ashes and residual bones are immersed in the river. Death pollution lasts for twelve days with the *shradha* ceremony being performed on the tenth day after death. In the feast held for the members of the community home-brewed liquor is served.

Land and water are the main resources of the Borpis. Their traditional occupation was that of ferrying people across the river but in recent times most of them have turned to agriculture, agricultural labour and casual labour as a means of livelihood. Very few of them hold a little land but the majority are landless. Both male and female work together in the fields and also as daily labourers. For some Borpis, the main source of livelihood is fishing, selling their catch to the Dhodias and Koknas. The mode of transaction in such cases is both cash and kind. They maintain direct links with the local market. A noticeable trend in the present is the increasing numbers of agricultural labour in the community. Child labour is also prevalent amongst them.

They do not have any traditional caste council. The village panchayat is of a heterogenous character. The village *Patel* mediates over all disputes and conflicts though the *Patel* himself is elected mainly from the Dhodia or Kokna community. Adultery, rape,

elopement and theft are considered crimes dealt with by their own village 'Panch' (council of elders).

The Borpis are Hindu worshipping the deities of the wider Hindu pantheon which is superimposed on a system of worship of their own local deities, such as *Ambaji*, *Dheraji* etc. In the past, they had folk religion but presently they celebrate all Hindu festivals including performance of *Satyanarayan katha* with the help of local Brahman priest. In the end of rainy season they also observe *Diwasa* with great enthusiasm. They hardly visit religious shrines or pilgrimage spots on account of their poor economic situation. At the time of Navratri they go to the houses of the Dhodias to celebrate the festival.

The community has an oral tradition of folk tales. According to a legend, Shiva and Parvati had approached the Borpis to ferry them across the river in their *tarapa* (boat) in return bestowing blessings on them for their services. According to another legend, the king of Dharampur, who had come to this area for hunting crossed the river with the help of Borpis. He was pleased enough to grant some land to the Borpis and also kept them in employment for ferrying members of royalty across the river. Like other tribal groups of the area, they also dance and sing on festive and marriage occasions. Their traditional musical instruments is small drum, *dhol*, flutes and *Tadpu*.

Traditionally, the Borpis accept both cooked and uncooked food from almost all the Hindu caste groups. But they do not accept food from Scheduled Castes. They maintain fairly cordial relations with the Dhodias and Koknas and also with Kumbhar and Nai as well as other service castes. Their way of life and economic conditions are quite similar to that of the tribals of this region.

Their educational levels are very low and there are no professionals within the community.

Formal education is now being given to both boys and girls, not many children study beyond the primary stage because of economic compulsions. Their attitude towards indigenous medicine based on herbs and plants i.e., is very favourable though now they use a combination of the modern and traditional systems. Their attitude towards a planned family is becoming favourable with women undergoing sterilization after the birth of the third or fourth child.

Drinking water is available within the locality either through wells or handpumps. They listen to radio and occasionally visit the cinema. Cow-dung cakes, fire wood are used as fuel resources but mainly wood which they gather from the forest. They also use kerosene oil for lighting. They avail of the public distribution of food grains through fair price shops. The attitude towards savings is not favourable considering their poor economic condition. They are however dependent on the Dhodia community with the loans taking the form of labour in the fields of their creditors.

Jyotirmay Chakraborty

BRAHMA KSHATRI

The word Brahma Kshatri literally means warriors of Brahma. The community claims descent from the progeny of those Kshatriya who got shelter from the Sarasvat Brahmans against the sage Parasurama who is believed to have destroyed all the Kshatriyas in revenge to the wrong done to his family. Brahma Kshatriyas are divided into five endogamous groups on a territorial basis. They are Punjabi Brahma Kshatri, Sorathia Brahma Kshatri (Amreli, Jethpur, Rajkot & Jamnagar, Divecha Brahma Kshatri, (north Gujarat, i.e. Mehsana distt.) Kutchh Brahma Kshatri. There is another endogamous group distributed in Ahmedabad city and Bharuch district with Desai, Deewan, Munshi and Thakore as surnames. They do not mingle with the above mentioned subgroups because they are non-vegetarians. Brahma Kshatri further have six endogamous divisions namely Brahma Kshatri proper, Chudgor, Dakhani, Dasa, Natravala and Pancha. Only Brahma Kshatri proper and Dakhani interdine and intermarry. Dasas and Pancha are believed to be the offsprings of Brahma Kshatris and women of other castes. Natravala and Chudgars are functional in origin, the first following the occupation of making idlo's eyes and the second bangles (Enthoven, 1920). Nagar Tattah in Sindh (Pakisthan) is believed to be the original home of Kutch Brahma Kshatri and from there they migrated about 400 years ago to other places in search of livelihood. Another account states that they originated in Punjab from where a few migrated to Sindh and then to Kutch. An equal number migrated to Ahmedabad about 500 years ago from where they moved to different parts of India, going where they are called Gujarat Kshatris. They were 3,305 according to 1909 consus (Enthoven, 1920). Kutchhi Brahma Kshatris are distributed in Mandvi taluka practising carpentry. Kachchi is spoken within the kin group as well as with outsiders and Gujarati script is used. A few speak Gujarati and Hindi also.

The community is vegetarian. *Bajri*, wheat and rice are their staple food. Having *shiran* (consisting of *kichadi* with butter milk

or tea) as breakfast in the morning is a special feature of the community. Pulses, most commonly *moong* and locally available vegetables are also part of their diet. *Sheera*, a preparation made out of jaggery, wheat and ghee is consumed on special occasions both festive as well as on death rituals.

They have twelve clans out of which nine were reported viz. Mehara, Tandon, Kapoor, Soning, Talvai, Chopade, Bohare, Kakkad, Sethia which in course of time expanded to 96 clans. There is no hierarchy amongst these exogamous clans. For the last ten to fifteen years, a few members suffix Khatri to their names. The community occupies the position after Brahman in local social hierarchy. They consider themselves at par with other Kshatriyas. Quite a few perform priestly functions for other Kshatriya communities but as they claim descent from Kshatriyas do not accept *dan* (charity) in return.

Clan exogamy is the norm. Even marrying a girl from *mausal* (mother's clan) as far as possible is avoided. The earlier practice of marriage at an extremely young age has given way to a adult marriage. Now boys marry at the age of 25 years and girls around 19. This is due to government's regulations and also spread of education and freedom in choosing mates. Mates are acquired through negotiations. Monogamous marriages are the norm. Applying vermillion (*sindur*) wearing a *siri* (nose ring) are the symbols of married woman. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriage. Divorce is allowed and takes place through legal channels. Remarriage of divorcees is becoming common but widows and widowers remarry atleast a year after the death of the spouse. All marriage rites are performed in case of widower marriage with unmarried girls but in the case of widow marriage called *ghar-gena* no elaborate rites are performed. The widow simply puts her forehead to that of the man she is marrying in the presence of caste elders. Only junior sororate is practised.

Many of the old usages connected with marriage as an institution are no longer being strictly observed including the prohibition of marrying into one's mother's clan. The wearing of *dhoti* and a specific white turban *athara nipag* again is not strictly followed by grooms in the present day while brides no longer wear the *Chandru*, *Khayi*, *Kotadia*, *Chunadi* with its characteristic design of snakes always given by the groom's family. All these lapses are condoned

by the payment of a nominal fine of Rs. 2/- to the *Panchayat* (caste council).

Within a year of marriage, married sons set up their independent establishments. A woman is to observe avoidance in relation to all the male elders of her husband's family which is however has almost given up in the last ten years. The aunt (father's sister) and maternal uncle customarily confer the name on their nephew/niece. Joking relations in the form of teasing and merry-making during marriage ceremonies is the privilege of the family of the bride. Confrontation exists amongst brothers and between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law or among the daughters-in-law, this being one of the reason why they go in for a nuclear family. In practice, only males inherit property. Very often this involves a legal battle between brothers and sisters. The community interacts with all other communities for economic purposes and within themselves for social and ritual activities.

Women have no right of inheritance. Women have a role in ritual and religious activities. Middle class Kshatri woman contribute to family income by doing *bandhani* (a tie and dye). As a daughter, she helps her mother in domestic matters and takes care of the younger siblings. As a wife service to her parents-in-laws is a primary duty. As a mother, she sees that children are brought up properly and receive formal and informal education.

The *satasi* ceremony in the seventh month of first pregnancy is performed, after which she is taken to her natal home for delivery attended by the traditional mid-wife from the 'Hajam' community. On the sixth day, *chatti* ceremony is performed in which the newborn is given its name. Birth pollution for the mother lasts twenty-one days. At the age of six months the child is fed a sweet which takes place at its grandfather's place. The tonsure ceremony at the age of three is carried out in the shrine of the clan deity. The sacred thread ceremony for the males is performed any time before marriage.

Marriage alliances are initiated by the parents of the boy through *vichaya* (go-between). The marriage is solemnized a year after the *sagai* (betrothal). The months of Megha and Baisakh of the Hindu calendar are regarded as most suitable for marriages. Rituals like *samootha* (application of mark on the forehead) *Mandaparopan* (erection of marriage both) preceded by *Ganesh pooja* are performed

on the day of marriage or a day before it. The *hashta milap* (clasping of hands by bride and the groom) follows and ends with *chori phera* (the customary four circumambulations of the sacred fire). The marriage feast is hosted by the bride's parents and the nuptial ceremony takes place the same night at the groom's house. On the first Sunday or Tuesday the bride returns to her parents where she is invited by her relatives for dinner, called *Sathada*. Later, she is sent back to her in-law's house permanently.

The dead are cremated immediately after death occurs. The ash *thadhi* collected on the third day is immersed in rivers or the sea. In the '*dasayo*' ceremony makes undergo tonsure and the *saramana* ceremony is performed on the eleventh day. By feeding atleast twelve Brahmans after the performance of the *ghadachadana* ceremony (in which 12 small earthen pots filled with sweets or water in one of them in which the tail of a calf are immersed are all thrown into the river). In the feast that follows only those younger than the deceased partake of it. *Chamchar* (death anniversary) is performed every year.

Carpentry is now the chief source of income for them. *Rangara* (dyeing) was the traditional occupation of the community. Besides carpentry, they earn their livelihood by doing petty business, services in government and private organisations and in agriculture. Women also earn as labourers in *Bandhani* business controlled mainly by the Muslim Khatris. All the economic activities are measured in terms of cash. Considerable numbers of the community migrated to Bombay and the Gulf countries as carpenters or labourers and to Zanzibar (Africa) before independence.

Each group of Brahma Kshatri has its own registered caste association i.e. Sri Bhuj Brahma Kshatriya Gnathia at the local and have the same at national level. Its executive (total eleven members), selected from the assembled Brahma Kshatris once in a year. It looks after day-to-day social and religious activities of the community. In order to supply text books and note books and extend other educational assistance to its boys, they formed Sri Bhuj Brahma Kshatriya Yuvak Mandal for the entire district of Kutch. Brahma Kshatri group has All India association in Bombay with different wings for woman and youth who extend all possible help to the needy. Samastha Brahma Kshatriya Yuvak Sangh,

Bombay published a book entitled 'Sampark' in 1986 giving details about the different wings of Organizations alongwith its Office bearers and activities in order to help the members of the community.

The Brahma Kshatris belong to the Vaishnav sect of the Hinduism. Each clan has its own deity who is worshipped at the time of various rituals. Blessings are sought after marriage and *chodhachedhi* (cloth used to join the clothes of bride and groom during marriage) is left. They attend the *Mela* (fair) falling on the *Amavasya* of *Sravan* and the first two days of *Bhadra* month at *Patannav* village in *Rajkot* district. It provides an opportunity to select mates for their children. All the Hindu festivals like *Diwali*, *Dussera*, *Holi* and *Janmasthami* are celebrated. The *Saraswat* clan from the *Rajgor* Brahmans serve as sacred specialist. Only *Sindhi* Brahma Kshatri who came from *Sindh* after partition visit the *asthan* of *Leelashah* at *Adipur* near *Gandhidham*. They have excelled in tie and dye work.

A few Brahma Kshatri woman of especially urban areas, during their leisure hours earn by sewing and also by doing *bhandhani* (tie and dye) work on garments on a contract basis.

Brahma Kshatris who are referred as *Motinath* (high caste) had traditional social linkages with Muslim *Khatris* and the latter community used to seek advice if need. They had occupational and social and relations with all communities and among themselves respectively. They accept/exchange water and *Kachcha* as well as *pucca* food with all Hindu communities like Brahmans, *Bania*, *Rajputs* and *Lohana*. They share water, road, school, crematorium and other facilities with all the communities of the region and enter freely into all temples, houses and *Panchayat* chairs. They have very limited representation in local bodies like municipalities.

The level of literacy is moderate in Brahma Kshatri community as there are good number of graduates among both the sexes. Modern medical facilities are utilized and there is a positive trend towards Family Planning. Almost all the members of community have drinking water and electricity connections in their houses. A few got loan for carpentry work under the small scale industry scheme. All the school going children of Brahma Kshatriya community are able to enjoy mid-day meal scheme. Many of them

have S.B. accounts in Banks. It is suggested that instead of caste, income may be taken as basis to give any loan/subsidy of the Government.

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CHAKEE

The Chakee claim their origin from the Sumra community of Sindh. In Sindhi the word *chakee* means how to tell. It is claimed that Chaneeswar invaded Sindh with the help of Alla-Ud-Din Khilji to dethrone his younger brother, Dodha. Many Sumras ran away to Kutch, Jamnagar and other parts of Saurashtra region. Veer Abda of Ramper (near Nalia) gave shelter to about 2700 Sumra women and fought against Alla-Ud-Din but he was killed. On learning the death of Veer Abada, all the young Sumra women led by Dadi Sumra buried themselves alive, in order to be free from the clutches of Alla-Ud-Din's soldiers. A few male Sumra, took shelter in the houses of Lohar and Ganchi communities. One Ganchi gave shelter to a Sumra youth by allowing him to sleep with his daughter. On being questioned by Alla-Ud-Din's soldiers about his credentials, he replied - *chakee*. From that day onwards, they came to be known as Chakee. They are distributed mainly in Bhuj town, Mandvi, Mundra and Moghpat region of Kutch district besides some in Jamagar district. They speak Kachhi but the Gujarati script is used. Most of the male members know Gujarati and a few speak Hindi also.

They Chakee are occasionally non-vegetarian. Bajri and wheat are the common cereals. Rice is also taken sometimes. They consume lamb, mutton of sheep, goat and chicken. Vegetables and fruits are consumed. Groundnut oil is used as a cooking medium.

The Chakee community has fifteen clans. Some of the clan names are *Allayo*, *Makkad*, *Khokhra*, *Davva*, *Banani*, *Lela* and *Kotuda* which are named after their occupation, village or their ancestor. They suffix Chakee to their name in order to disassociate themselves from Sumra or Ganchi community. They themselves rank lower than Syed and Sumra.

Parallel and cross-cousins marriages are preferred. Age at marriage is 18 to 20 years and 20 to 24 years for girls and boys respectively. Marriages are arranged by parents. Monogamy is the

most prevalent form of marriage. However polygyny is also permitted for the sake of begetting children. Wearing of *siri* (nose ring) given by her parents is the symbol of a married women. Patrilocal rule of residence exist after marriage. Divorce is granted on grounds of maladjustment between the spouses. Remarriage of widow/widower is allowed after a minimum period of four and half months known as *iddat* (probationary period) and forty days respectively. The same rule is applicable in divorce cases.

Both extended and nuclear families are prevalent in the Chakee community. *Ghunghat* (veil) on the face is strictly observed by women as a mark of avoidance with all affinal male relatives. Joking relationship also exists with the husband's and wife's younger sibs. Only males inherit the ancestral property. The community interacts for ritual and religious purposes with the neighbouring Muslim communities.

The Chakee woman has no right of inheritance. Although her advice is sought on social activities the final decision rests with the husband. She takes an active part in the rituals. She supplements the family income by working as a labourer in factory or scarcity relief work or in the field. However, she is not allowed to go out of the village to work.

Khoroharna is performed in the eighth month of first pregnancy and the expectant mother is presented with a coconut, jaggery and some fruits before she is taken to her parents house by her mother and sister-in-law. Delivery normally takes place in the house with the help of an experienced midwife. The mother is considered unclean for forty days. A name is given to the child within 24 hours of its birth by *fui* while whispering the *aza* in the child's ears. *Mundan* (tonsure) is performed at the shrine of Bokharipir at Mundra, within the first year of the birth. The male child's circumcision is performed by a *Hajam* (barber) during a summer month before the child is three years old.

Marriage alliances are usually initiated by the groom's parents and are settled after giving Rs. 5/- in the hand of the girl. This is known as *dudhka* and is followed by betrothal. Marriage is solemnised within one year of betrothal ceremony. Except three months, namely, *Terateji*, *Safar* and *Muharram* (Islamic calendar months) marriages are performed throughout the year. After *nikah* ceremony and feast, the groom's relatives return alongwith the

bride. After seven days she is taken back by her parents house. This is called *sathado* and again brought back to her in-laws after eight to thirty days stay. If the groom resides in the same village or town, she visits her parents early morning on Friday and returns home in the evening.

The dead are buried within hours of death. After bathing and wrapping up the corpse in a white new cloth, it is kept in the *janaza* (coffin box) which is covered with shawl or *bandhani* or black *puthara* in case of a male, married woman or unmarried girl and widowed woman respectively. On the third day after death *ziarat* is performed; *Dasma* on the tenth day and *chalisma* on the 37th or 38th day after death follow. Flowers are offered at the grave to mark these days. On *chalisma*, the grave covered with a new cloth is taken away by the ritual specialist for his services. In case of death of children below ten years, no rites are performed except *Ziarat*.

Now very few extract oil which was the traditional occupation of the community, as they are not aware of modern techniques of extracting oil. Most of them earn their livelihood by working as agricultural labourers in village or labourers in towns. A majority of them earn by playing their camel or hand cart. They do not own land. Child labour exists. They receive wages in cash. Most of the labourers have migrated to Jamnagar or Bombay and a few of them to Zanzibar (Africa) and Gulf countries in search of livelihood.

The community has Chakee *jamat* at local level and Chakee *Jamat* Bhuj at regional level. It is registered with Wakf Board, Ahmedabad. At regional level, the *Jamat* consists of an executive committee of nine members i.e. *Patel*, one vice-president, one secretary, one treasurer and five *karobhari* (members). There is no fixed term for the office bearers and new members are selected as and when required. The council acts as mediator in solving disputes relating to marriage. In case of divorce cases both the parties are heard and the one found guilty is penalised by a punitive feast to the *Jamat* members. The council runs a mosque and maintains its own graveyard from the money earned by way of rent.

The community belongs to the Sunni sect of Islam. They have a strong belief in *pirs*. Dadi Sumriat at Abadasa Rampar is considered

as the chief *pir* of the community where they celebrate *Urs* (fair) on the seventh month of the calendar year. Each clan has its own *pirs*, viz, Kathia clan has *Bibi Ma* at Vinzan village of Abdasa taluka. They visit the shrines of their *pirs* for first *mundan* and seek blessings. They go on a pilgrimage to Hajipeer, Pir Nakdum Jania of Mandvi, Bokharipir of Mundra and sometimes Haji Ali Pir in Bombay, Haji Malan Baba in Kalyan and Ajmer Sharief. They utilise the services of a *moulavi* for marriage purposes, and *mullah* (from Qureshi community) for death rites. Besides celebrating Ramzan and Bakrid, they give importance to Moharram in which they take out the procession of the wooden horses of Imam Hussain on eleventh day of Moharram month.

Most of them live in separate *wadas* (streets) and interact with each other during social and ritual activities. They have economic links with Vania community as the latter purchases oil from them. They accept/exchange water or food with all Muslim communities. Inter-community marriages and putative kinship are completely absent. They share water resources, the facilities of road, school etc. with all communities but of graveyard with other Muslim communities.

The level of literacy is very low among the Chakee. Girls are not allowed to study after attaining puberty. Very few boys reach the school level in education. Modern medical facilities are moderately utilized. The community does not believe in family planning. They use modern communication facilities as majority of them reside in towns or developed villages. Few have reaped benefits from IRDP or Employment Guarantee Schemes. The school-going children enjoy the mid-day meal scheme of the Gujarat state Government.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

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CHAMAR

The term 'Chamar' is derived from the word for hide *chamra*. The Chamar are engaged in skinning the hide of dead animals. Enthoven (1920) writes that Chamar is a synonym for Khalpa. They are distributed in almost all the districts of Gujarat. Population figure as per Census of India 1971 is 5671. The Chamar cannot be identified by any distinctive style of dress or ornamentation. They communicate in Gujarati. They use Gujarat script. They are included amongst the scheduled castes.

The chamar are non-vegetarian in their food habits. Rice, coarse grains like *jowar* and *bajra* and wheat along with pulses and gram such as *tur* and *urad* are the staples. They use groundnut and mustard oil as cooking media. Males consume alcoholic drinks regularly which they purchase from the market. The women do not partake of it. Fruits are also consumed though rarely. They take milk, milk products, smoke bidi and chew betel leaves. They use snuff also.

The Chamar have clans such as Veghela, Chawra, Parmar, Sengal and Makwana. They are not aware of the origins or significance of these clan names. Clans are differentiated at social level and their main function is to regulate marriage alliances. There has been no change in clan names. Chamar regard themselves as of low status in social order and in the varna system they place themselves in the Sudra category. The neighbours from other communities also regard them as of low social status.

The Chamar are endogamous at the community level. Junior sorrorate and junior levirate type of unions are practised. Adult marriage is the rule with girls marrying around the age of 18 years and boys around 20 years. Mode of acquiring a mate is through negotiation. Monogamy is the usual form of marriage. Symbol of married status of a woman are the wearing of bangle of ivory and nose ring. The system of payment of bride-price in cash is prevalent. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce is permissible on grounds of adultery, maladjustment or cruelty.

Children are the liability of the father in divorce cases. Both husband and wife can seek divorce. Remarriages of widow, widower and divorcees is permissible. There has been no significant changes in the institution of marriage recent times except that marriageable age is now higher and symbols of marriage are not observed strictly by women.

Nuclear family is the dominant amongst the Chamar. The family is a well kin and cohesive unit. Children are expected to look after their parents in their old age. The relationships between mother-in-law and son-in-law on the one side and daughter-in-law and her father-in-law on the other are based on avoidance. A woman observes the same relationship with her husband's elder brother. This is reciprocal. Joking relationships exist between a man and the younger sister and brother of his wife. All the sons share equally in their father's property. Succession is through the eldest son. There has been no significant change in family patterns except for a rise in the number of nuclear families and occasional conflict and confrontation due to check on the freedom of youngsters by the elders of the family.

Women are not entitled to inheritance. They participate in agricultural activities and in activities connected with animal husbandry. Collection of fuel and fetching potable water are other major duties of the women of the household. They have a role to play in social and religious spheres but women do not participate in political activities and neither do they have any role in the mechanism of social control. Although women contribute to the family income, they do not control family expenditure. Women are consulted inspiringly but they do not possess decision making powers. The position of women in Chamar society on the whole is low in relation to men.

During the seventh month of the pregnancy a woman goes to her paternal home for the first delivery. Her father-in-law visits her there and presents her with ghee, wheat, molasses and clothes. This ceremony is known as *Khola Bhara*. After delivery, her father presents clothes to her father-in-law in exchange. After childbirth mother and child are kept in a separate room for forty days. A lamp is lit below the bed and a banyan leaf is placed. Food is given to animals as thanks giving. The mother and child bathe in warm water from the second day after birth and for a period

lasting forty days after that. The Goddess Chamunda is worshipped and thereafter, she is allowed to enter the kitchen. *Babri* (mundan) ceremony is performed in the fifth year in the case of males only. The clan deity or *kuldevi* is worshiped.

Marriages are negotiated by the parents of a prospective couple with the help of a third person. The negotiations are concluded by a mutual visit to each other's house by the fathers of the prospective couple who exchange gifts. The father of the groom presenting a coin and coconut to the father of the would be bride. The latter in turn presents Rs. 5/- when he visits the home of his prospective son-in-law to finalize the date of marriage. This is done in consultation with a priest. The wedding procession with the groom at the head arrive at the bride's residence for the principle ritual. Before entering the house of the bride the groom crushes two earthen lamps under foot at the entrance. The bride's mother welcomes him with a plate containing rice, betel-nuts a joss stick or jowar stick, a bell and vermillion which is applied on his fore-head. *Pithimala* (turmeric and oil) ceremony is performed in the houses of the bride and groom one day before the marriage. The priest (*Bhamti*) invites the girl and boy on the *yagnya* place. The bride and groom's hands are united and tied with a cloth, kept tying for about ten minutes and thereafter released. Ends of the boy and the girls clothes are tied and the couple circumambulate the sacred fire (*chori*) four times. Bridegroom remains in the front for the first two rounds and the bride for the second two rounds. Thereafter, bride and groom are escorted to a separate room. Next day the couple along with the *barat* return to the groom's residence. The bridegroom's mother receives the couple cremoniously. The couple are provided with *chokla* (rice) which both drop constantly and enter into the house. The couple participate in some ritual in which only females are present.

Their dead are cremated. Ganga water, copper coin and *tulashi* leaf are put in the mouth when he/she has lost breath. The dead body is washed and wrapped up in a new cloth and then carried to the cremation ground by the sons and relatives. The dead body is placed with its head towards south because Chamars have a belief that Yama comes from the north and pulls away the deceased by its legs. The bones and ashes of the deceased are collected by the eldest son and kept hanging outside the house in a mud pot.

The pot is immersed in the Saraswati river on Karthikipurnima by the eldest son. *Kriakaram* (obsequies) rites are observed on the twelfth day. During these days the sons and the close relatives remain on a simple diet and a feast is arranged to friends and relatives. Except curtailment of expenditure on the ritual feast, there is no change in the ritual observances of the Chamar.

The Chamars are landless community and their traditional occupation is hide work. They remove the skins from dead animals and sell them in the butcher's shop. Of late, they have been continuing their traditional calling as a primary occupation as well as performing daily labour, masonry and mill work. Some of them are engaged in auto driving. They have a direct link with the daily market which is fully regulated by cash.

The Panchayat of the Chamar is called *Nati Panchayat* (Caste-council). Five persons are selected on the basis of mutual consensus. The head of this institution is known as *Metar*. The panchayat decides disputes within the community members e.g. illegal love affairs, disrespect for traditional norms, insult to traditional council. *Panchayat* tries to settle disputes by mutual dialogue. In serious offences the guilty person is fined with cash and in some cases ex-communication from the society. The role of statutory councils is to plan and implement development activities.

The Chamars profess Hinduism and their family deities are Chamunda, Harsathmatha and Bhakani. The village deities are Ambaji, Khorla, Debi, Baria Deb. The Chamars also worship Durgadevi, Kalikadevi, Bahuchar, Jogini, Meledi, Lakhmijee, Gayatri and Santoshimata. The sacred places of the Chamar are Ujjain, Chotila, Pawgarh which they visit at the earliest opportunity for pilgrimages. They observe the festivals like Janamastami, Diwali, Holi, Raksha Bandhan. The festivals are of socio religious significance. They do participate in the local fairs viz.: Janmasthan mela, and Ramdebjee ki mela. The sacred specialists of the Chamar are from the same community who perform birth, marriage and death rites.

They Chamar use percussion musical instruments and sing light music.

Treditonally, the food and water from Chamars are not accepted by any other castes except Bhangi. The Chamar, however do not accept food and water from them. They share water sources with

other communities and visit the same religious shrines. The Chamars participate in traditional festivals and festivity but do not have any specific role. The relationship between cultivator and labourer is cordial. The labourers get regular wages. Some of the community members are holding white collar jobs like teachers, engineers, and doctors. Political leadership has emerged at regional level and mayors of some Municipalities belongs to the Chamar community.

Formal education is favoured for boys and partly favourable for girls. Boys generally study upto the college but some of them drop out due to economic reasons. They have to work for the livelihood of their family. Generally girls study upto secondary level. Girls also drop out due to economic constraints and social hindrances. They treat ailments through a private medical practitioner as hospital facility is available at distant places. The attitude of the Chamars towards modern medicine is favourable. They use both modern and traditional medicine. Chamars have a moderate encourageable attitude towards Family Planning and every women get sterilized after three children. Drinking water is available within the locality through pipe water. They make use of all modern media, transport and communication facilities available within their settlements, to the extent they can. The Chamars use firewood and kerosene oil for fuel. They avail of mid-day meals scheme for their children. The Chamars avail of the facility of ration distribution through fair price shop.

S.R. Maitra

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CHAMPTA

The Champta are also known as to Chamta Salat. They believe that they were once Salats. Once their womenfolk got sexually involved with somebody and in exchange they earned some money. It led their community elders to encourage their women in flesh trade, while they neglected their occupation of working on stones. From then onwards, they came to be called Champta or Champta Salaat. They are mainly distributed in Rajkot and Junagadh districts. They speak in the in Kathiawadi dialect and use Gujarati script.

They are non-vegetarians but do not consume pork or beef. Their staple food includes *bajra*, *jawar* and rice taken with available pulses and vegetables. Non-vegetarian food is taken only occasionally. Consumption of milk and milk products and fruit is occasional. Consumption of liquor, smoking *bidis* and chewing betel and arecanuts is common amongst both males and females.

The Champta society has different exogamous *ataks*. Because of their profession Champta are considered quite low in the local social hierarchy. The clients of the Champta women are from different communities both high and low.

Clan exogamy is maintained in marriage alliances. Matrilateral cross consin marriages are practised. The Champta males take brides from the Wadi and sometimes from Vaghri communities on the assurance that they won't induct their wives into the profession of prostitution. Their women enters into alliances living together with men from the Sathwara, Manbi and Muslim communities who stay with them and have children also. The Chamta women have such alliances with married men too. Levirate and sorrorate marriages are permitted. Patrilocal rules of residence are practiced.

The families are predoninently nuclear type. An unmarried daughter who is not in the profession gets a share in the father's property, other wise, inheritance follows male equigeniture. Intra-family linkages are largely restricted to their own community. The eldest son succeeds the father.

The women who are housewives are dominated by their husband.

Those who are in flesh trade contribute to the family income and control the management of expenditure. Even then they enjoy a secondary status in the society.

Khoda-bharva (lap filling) is observed in the fifth or seventh month of first pregnancy. After the birth of the child *chhatti* is observed on the eighth day and on that day father's sister names the baby. Solid food is given to the child on any day from the fifth month onwards. On that day blessings of family deity are sought. Eight day pollution period is observed on the first menstruation of the girls. Marriage ceremonies are very simple and circumstantial. Marriages are settled through negotiation. In the instance of death the corpse is given a bath and wrapped in new clothes. It is carried to the burial ground on the cot alongwith articles like clothes and a mat that the body is buried alongwith. Mortuary rites are observed on the twelfth or thirteenth day.

The Champtas are a landless community and are mainly generally engaged in non-agricultural wage-labour. Their traditional occupation of working on stones has been completely abandoned. Their women are the main earners.

The community has a *panch* and a headman called *Aghevan*. The post is hereditary and follow male primogeniture. All disputes, problems or skirmishes are settled by the *panch*. It imposes cash fine on the offender.

The Champtas are Hindu whose main god is Shiva and the local deity is Khodiyar Mata. The *Bhuva* serve them as sacred specialist as well as magicon religions performer. They are the shamans. The *Bhuva* has to lead a strict and rigid life. They observe Shivratri, Navratri, Holi and other Hindu festivals. The Hindu sacred centres are the pilgrimage sites for them.

A few of them are literate but education is practically absent. A few Champta children do attend school now-a-days. Modern medicare is preferred. Modern family welfare programme has had no impact on them, though, otherwise they have fewer children. No beneficiary scheme has been utilized by them under IRDP, and other governmental schemes. ICDS scheme is not availed of but mid-day meal scheme is availed of by their children in the school. They make use of public distribution system, but banking facilities are not utilized by them.

P.B.S.V. Padmanabham

CHANDRASENIYA KAYASTHA PRABHU

The Chandravamsh Kayasth Prabhu is one of four divisions of the Prabhu community, the three others being Pathara Prabhu or Tamini Prabhu, Davane Prabhu and Dharuv Prabhu. According to one account, the community has derived its name after Chandrasena, a Kshatriya ruler and another account says that the community got its name from Chandrasena, one of the hundred sons of Arjuna (Enthoven, 1920). They are said to have come from Kashmir through Indore to Baroda and others from Maharashtra to serve as warriors or writers to the Gaekwad rulers of Vadodara especially during the regime of Sayyaji Rao Gaikwad. They are distributed in Baroda, Surat, Brooch, Valsad, Ahmedabad and Jamnagar cities. Their number was 21,941 according to 1901 Census. Marathi is used for writing and speaking among themselves as against Gujarati in relation to others. They also use Gujarati script.

The Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu community are non-vegetarian consuming meat of sheep or goat, fish and egg. Wheat-roti and rice are the staple food. Tur, Chana (gram), Mung, Muth, Voran (sweet pulse) and Casur are the pulses and ground nut oil is used as medium of cooking. All seasonally available vegetables are eaten. Atleast one fruit like banana, apple or orange or grapes or Chickoo and one sweet besides lassi (butter-milk) are taken after lunch and supper respectively. Tea is also taken. *Jalebi*, *Gulabjamun* and *Shrikhand* etc. are special festival items besides eating *Puran puri* on Holi Festival. Eating of non-vegetarian food is taboo during Dussera festival.

The community has four endogamous divisions, each of which has several *Odhnava* (surnames) like Gupta, Phanse, Karnik, Deshpande, Choubha Palkar, Chinchalkar, Raje, Sulai, Pradhan, Mghalae, Chosalkar, Ambaegarkar, Deshmukha, Dalvi etc. The names are based on the basis of nativity or occupation of ancestors. The *odhanava*'s main function is to indicate one's ancestry. These *odhnava*s or surnames are not exogamous. They have a number

exogamous gotras. They admit that they are placed after Brahman and Kshatriyas and above rest of the communities in local social hierarchy.

Gotra exogamy and community endogamy are the rules and cousins as well as relatives upto four or five generations on either side of parents are avoided in mate selection. Mates are acquired through negotiations. Monogamy is the only form of marriage practised. Gold and Black bead necklace (*Mangalsutra*) anklet, silver toe ring and *sindhoor* (vermilion) are the symbols of married woman. As such community has no system of bride-price/dowry but the father gives certain essential things to his daughter. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriage. Divorce is hardly practised. Widow remarriage is not allowed but widows have started re-marrying over the last few years.

Owing to lack of sufficient space in urban centres nuclear families are more prevalent. Joking relations between a woman and her husband's younger brother are allowed. All sons get equal share in ancestral property and daughters have the right to inherit only in the absence of a son. The eldest son succeeds as head of household on the death of his father. They maintain intimate relations with their maternal and paternal uncles among whom mutual help and co-operation are extended as and when required. An increase in the incidence of nuclear families is the new trend.

The Prabhu woman have no right of interitance. They have little role in the economic spheres and are confined to household duties. They are consulted on social and religious matters of the family and play a vital role in the ritual spheres. Proper bringing up of children are considered as the prime responsibilities of the women. On the whole the women enjoy secondary status in the society.

The first delivery is arranged after presenting coconut, saree, sweets and one golden ring or two bangles to the pregnant woman by her parents in the seventh month of pregnancy in a ceremony called *Kholobhara* after which she is brought to the natal home. Forty five days of pollution of the mother ends with a pooja (worship) known as *Jalpoojan*. The child is given name by his/her mother's eldest sister in consultation with a Brahman priest and she is rewarded suitably for this obligation. *Janey* (thread wearing

ceremony) among boys is performed before seven years of age or else on the marriage day.

Alliance is initiated by either of the parties. Exchange of golden rings, new clothes, dry coconuts and sweet boxes and fees for entry in the caste's Marriage Register known as *muhurt* takes place if both parties are satisfied. Marriage is solemnized within one year of betrothal ceremony. Rituals like *Haldilagana* application of turmeric paste, *Ganesh Poojan* and gift of a suit to the groom by the girl's parents called *srimani poojan* takes place on the day preceding the marriage. A feast is arranged by the girl's parents after the *muhurt* and this gesture reciprocated by the boy's parents on the day after marriage. Nuptial ceremony is arranged at the groom's house on the same night of marriage.

The dead are cremated, sometimes at an electric crematorium. The ashes of the deceased are collected and kept in a white cloth at the entrance of the house till *vidhi* is performed on twelfth day by immersing the ashes in a nearby river and *suthak* (mourning) is observed till that day. Death procession is led either by the eldest or the youngest son and all patrilineal male relatives undergo head and mustache shaving during tenth to twelfth day. Lord Ganesh is worshipped on the thirteenth day of death. *Varsh sradha* (anniversary) is performed by worshipping Lord Ganesh and giving *dan* (charity) to the Brahman-priest and feeding close relatives. Curtailing of rituals and non-observance of certain customs during the performance of life-cycle rituals are some of the changes reported.

Civil services, and to some extent military service in the Gaekwad dynasty of Vadodara was the traditional occupation and still many depend on the former occupation for their livelihood. Services are the primary source of earning. They are mainly an urban community. All the economic activities are measured in terms of cash. Some of the members have migrated to other cities or towns in search of more employment avenues.

The Chandrasenya Kayastha Prabhu has caste-council at local level whose seven or nine member executive committee is selected on a voice vote. A general body meeting is called once in a year on *Phalgun Sudhapancham* day to discuss the activities of the Chandravamsh Kayastha Prabhu community and steps to be taken for better organisation of the community. Each local caste council

is affiliated to All India CKP Association, Bombay where members from different local levels meet after October or November every year to discuss the activities of the CKP. It has started performing *samooch-halga* (community marriages) in recent years. The statutory councils have little role in the social activities of the Prabhu community, whose main function is to plan and implement welfare activities.

The community belongs to the Shaivite sect of Hinduism whose main deity is lord Shiva or Mahadev. Like Maharashtrian communities, Lord Ganpati is also worshipped as an important God before undertaking any deed. They undertake pilgrimage to Ashtavinayak temple near Lonawala of Maharashtra, Tirupati, Haridwar, Mathura, and Dwaraka in Gujarat are the other sacred centers visited by them. They employ Maharashtrian Brahmins for birth, marriage, and *janey* (thread wearing) and separate Brahmin priest known as Kayata for performing *kriya* (death rites). They give utmost importance to Ganesh Chaturthi and Navaratri (Dassera) among various festivals of Hindu religion.

Their migration is recalled in oral tradition. Females sing local folk songs during marriage rituals.

As a service class, the Prabhu community had traditional socio-economic relations with Gaekwad rulers of Vadodara or regional ruler of their settled areas but are confined among themselves for ritual relations. Separate *falias* (streets) are found wherever they are found in large number. They accept/exchange food or water with all the communities including Brahmans but not with Muslim, Harijan and Bhangi communities by tradition. Except with Kshatriyas, Muslim and Harijan communities, there is no objection for inter-community marriages in the CKP community. Drinking water, facilities of road, school, crematorium and entry to temple, Panchayat and other public offices are shared with all communities. Participation of them is not confined to local level politics. They maintain cordial relations with their employers and so enjoy a good reputation as sincere workers.

The level of literacy is high among them. Boys study upto graduation and girls upto higher secondary level, so there are some doctors, engineers and advocates and women are holding whitecollar jobs and teaching jobs. There are some entrepreneurs in the Prabhu community. Because of their better economic

conditions, they visit private nursing homes for medical and health care. They strongly believe in small family so most of the women in the reproductive age group get protected after two children. Almost all of their houses have connections of drinking water and electricity.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

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CHARAN

The Charan are also called Gadhvi. According to Enthoven (1920) the name Charan is derived from the word *char* which means grazing as large number of the tribe were originally grazers and the name Charan might also have been derived from the *char* meaning to spread as the Charans were bards attached to royal courts to spread royal fame by singing praises. As they were owners of Ghadh's (forts) in olden days, they are also known as Gadhvi. They are distributed in all the districts of Gujarat. The population of Charan, notified as Scheduled Tribe in the areas of Barda, Gir and Alech records 1426, according to 1981 census. They speak Gujarati and use Gujarati script. A man's dress consists of a pair of trousers, a waist cloth, a jacket, a loose short cotton coat and turban a round the head. Women wear a petticoat, a jacket, a robe and a black woolen blanket over the head. The male wear a silver anklet in the left foot, a gold finger ring, a necklace and a gold ear ring while females wear silver bracelets, silver anklets, gold necklace, a gold nose ring and a gold or silver ear rings.

Somatoscopic, somatometric and dermatoglyphic information about the Charans is available.

The Charan are strictly vegetarian and their staple food is *Jawar* or *barjri* roti with *tur*, *moong* and *moth* and occasionally seasonal vegetables. They drink milk and are in the habit of smoking bidi and chewing tobacco.

There are four endogamous groups among the Charans known as Prajia, Seva, Agarvacha and Tumbel. Hierarchical order does exist between these groups. Most of the Charans belongs to Prajia group. The first three groups are cattle breeders, whereas the fourth work as agricultural labourer, contract labourer and also cattle breeders. Each group has a number of clans. Prajias have the clans like Bavada, Bati, Gaganlar, Raba, Gagoria, Karnal, Jaysar, Takeria; Seva has clans like Bada, Talia, Basodia, Heykadia, Giga, Gujaria; Agarvacha has clans like Taperia, Hangaria, Kerwa and

Dhanjog. The main function of these clans is to regulate marriage alliances.

The Charans marry within their community. All the marriages are arranged. Marriage alliances called *Sagal* is fixed at the age of one to five years. Age at marriage for a boy is 20 - 22 years and for girls 18-20 years. Cross-cousin marriages are quite common i.e. father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter. They practice monogamy. Marriages by exchange are also taking place. They have the custom of paying bride-price, minimum of which is rupees 116. Marriages are performed during the month of *Maha* (March to April). The Brahmin fixes 3,5,8, or 12 days depending upon the horoscope of the bride and groom for performing marriages. Both patrilocal and neolocal types of residence are prevalent among the Charans. Divorce is discouraged. Although under special circumstances such as maladjustment and adultery, it can be obtained. Both male and female remarriages are allowed. Junior levirate and junior sororate exist among the Charans. In case of widow remarriage no ceremony is performed.

Both nuclear and extended types of families are common. A few cases of nascent as well as broken type of families are also reported. Daughter-in-law has to observe *pardah* (veil) in front of father-in-law and husband's elder brothers. Joking relationships exist between husband and wife's younger sister. They follow the Hindu law of inheritance. Only sons inherit the ancestral property. In the absence of male children, daughter or daughter's son inherits the property. The eldest son takes up the responsibilities after the father's death. The males have a dominant position. Women are confined to domestic work.

The charan do not observe any pre-delivery ritual. First delivery is arranged at the girl's parents house. She is taken to her parents house during her seventh month of pregnancy. She is not allowed to do any hard work during this period. A local *dai* (mid/wife) assists in the delivery. The mother is given special diet prepared out of dried ginger, *ajwan*, turmeric mixed with flour and molasses for a few days after delivery. The child is named on the sixth day by the father's sister (*fui*), new clothes are presented to the child by the father's sister. After five weeks of delivery the mother and child are brought back to her in-law's house. First feeding of cereals to the child takes place after one year. *Haldilagana* (applying turmeric

paste) ceremony is performed on the eve of the actual marriage date. *Marriage mandap* is erected on the day of marriage at the girl's house where the groom goes in procession accompanied by a band (*sahnai*). All the rituals connected with marriage are performed according to Hindu customs and ceremony is completed by going around the sacred fire four times. The first three rounds are led by the groom and the last by the bride. A feast is given to all those attending the marriage. The next day the bride is brought to her-in-laws' house where she stays for ten days and then returns to her parent's house.

The dead are cremated but children below ten years are buried. The dead body is bathed and wrapped up in new clothes and then kept on a floor newly plastered with cow-dung. A bamboo bier is prepared and after placing the dead body on it, it is carried by close relatives. As a rule women do not join the funeral procession. The funeral pyre is lit by the son of the deceased. The mourners take a bath before returning home. Mourning is observed for twelve days. On the twelfth day, *vidhi* is performed by a Brahman and on this day water is sprinkled in the house and on the roof. This marks the end of the pollution period. The priest is paid cash besides which a pair of new clothes as well as articles such as Umbrella, *suparee* (arecanut) cutter, cot, *gedera* (bed) etc. of the deceased are also given to him. The death anniversary is performed in *Bhadra* month every year by the deceased family in which all the *kutumb* (relatives) are given a feast.

The Charans are traditionally cattle breeders. They have also adopted agriculture as their secondary occupation after they were driven out of Gir forest and rehabilitated at the places near by the Gir forest. They sell milk in the nearby market. The medium of exchange is cash.

Nat Panchayat or traditional community panchayat exist to settle their disputes. It consists of three to four *agyavans* who are elder and respectable persons of the community. Defaulters are fined according to the nature of the crime committed. Suitable compensation in the form of money is rewarded to the aggrieved party. There exist a *gram panchayat* comprising of eight members belonging to various communities headed by a *sarpanch*, for settling their disputes.

The profess Hinduism. The main deity of the Charan is *Pithorai*

Mata located at Pathrama village in Mendarda taluka of Junagadh. She is their chief as well as regional deity. Every year she is worshipped during Dussehra by their Brahman priest. They also worship *Aodai Mata* besides other Hindu gods and goddesses like Vishnu, Shankar, Hanuman, Bhavani. They make frequent pilgrimages to *Appa Giga* at Sathadhra village followed by Somnathjee and Dwarka temples. Dussehra is their major festival. Diwali and Holi are also celebrated by them. They do not have any special art or craft of their own but women sing folk songs during marriages or on festive occasions.

Traditionally, they accept water and cooked food from Bharwad, Rabari but not from Muslims and Harijans. They share the well and crematorium with Bharwad and Rabari and visit the same religious shrines and participate in their traditional festivals and festivities. Patron-client relationship exists among the Charans. There are scholars, teachers and service men.

The level of literacy is low among the Charans inhabiting Saurashtra region of Gujarat whereas Charans inhabiting regions other than Saurashtra show a favourable attitude towards education of both boys and girls. Their attitude towards family planning is favourable and they make use of both indigenous and modern medicines. The main source of drinking water is well and tube wells. They listen to radio, watch, television and visit cinema. Roads, railway and post office exist in their settled areas. They use both organic manure and chemical fertilizers. Children avail of the mid-day meal scheme. Of late saving has become a positive trend among the Charans.

Gopal Krishan

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CHOUDHURI/CHOUDHURY

The Choudhuri are a well-documented community, with studies having conducted on this community since 1900. The term Choudhra is also used for the Choudhury community, though during 1961 census Choudhura and Choudhari appeared as independent groups with their respective population figures (Choudhara - 6,107 and Choudhri 1,37,469) in Gujarat. In the rural areas they are called Choudhara while in urban areas as Chaudhury. The Choudhury claim Rajput descent. A section of the Choudhury, call themselves 'Ravalia' after the last Rajput ruler of Pavagarh, Patai Raval. The Choudhury of Vyara as well as Mandavi talukas claim that their migrated hails from Pavagarh and settled in this part of the state about five hundred years back. According to the 1981 census the Choudhury population records at 2,19,897 and Choudhura, 5,646, totally to 2,25,361. They speak in *Chodhra* dialect and they are also well conversant with Gujarati. The Gujarati script is used.

The Choudhuri are non-vegetaria. The common cereals are rice, *kodra*, *jowar* and wheat. The pulses such as *toovar* and *urad*, and grams are taken. Tea is taken regularly. Alcohol is also consumed procured from the market. Fruits and vegetables are a part of the diet but occasionally consumed. Chewing betel leaves and smoking *bidi* are common habits among the men folk.

The Choudhhury have three endogamous divisions, namely; *Paragadia*, *Naladri* and *Valavda*. According to the 1961 census, they are further regmented into nine exogamous divisions called *kuls* (clans) such as Bamania, Dharat, Kanabi, Rajput, Ravelia, Valivi, Vashi, Hajarnia and Desai. Ganshyam Shah (1977) has mentioned five sections "Nana, Mota, Valvi, Tekaria and Bonda". Nana Choudhury are treated higher than the other section, the mota. The Vlavi, Tekaria, and Bonda are territorial groups. Nana and Mota Choudhuris are the numerically largest section while the rest are spread over Songadh, Mongool, and Mahuva Talukas. They have a story to relate to their origion; it is said that a cow

belonging to a Choudhri family died and its corpse was carried outside the village by two brothers, the elder (Mota) and the younger (Nana). The elder brother did not observe the obligatory customary ablutions but only washed his hands and feet with a few drops of water. The descendants of the elder brother were hence called 'Chatala' which means 'sprinkled with drops'. The 'Nana' descendants of the younger brother i.e. Nani who had immersed his body in water in accordance with custom, consider themselves "Elokpuri" which means "the pure ones". Both Mota and Nana are endogamous. The Choudhuris are again classified into two groups i.e. Varjelas and Sarjelas, depending on the extent to which they have been influenced by reformist ideas the Varjelas are a reformed group, followers of different *gurus* leading a life in accordance with the reformist ideas of the guru concerned but Sarjelas, who continue their traditional ways of life.

Endogamy is followed at the subgroup level and exogamy at the *kul* (clan) level. The patri-kin are known as *Paghdi ni-Sagai Vala* and on the female (wife) side kin as *Kapdini Sagal Vala*. The marriageable age for boys ranging from 18 to 21 years and for girls from 16 to 20 years. Mode of acquiring mates is through negotiation. *Ghar-jamai* marriages (marriage by service) also take place in which the prospective son-in-law serves the girl's father for a fixed period of time after which the marriage is solemnised. In such cases the couple settles at the girl's house. Monogamy is the common form though polygamy is also permitted. Symbol of marriage for a women is vermilion on the hair parting. Bride-price is paid in amount ranges from Rs.25-65. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce is permitted in case of maladjustment, economic hardship, adultery etc. The Varjelas prefer to restrict marriage ties to within the reform groups only.

The extended families are common and the nuclear families also co-exist. A married woman observes the avoidance relationships with the elder brothers of her husband by keeping veil in their presence and refraining from direct conversation. The same way she behaves with her father-in-law. Joking relation exist with the younger brothers of one's husband. Similarly a man has joking relations with the younger sister of his wife and grand parents have joking relationships with their grand children. In case of women, the male members of her husband's age group also have some

joking relationships. All the sons get an equal share of the parental property. Succession is through the eldest son.

The Chaudhuri do not permit proprietary rights to women. In family affairs their views are also considered during marriage negotiations. Women contribute to the family income. They enjoy a secondary status in their society.

Child birth takes place within the four walls of a dwelling hut. The mother and the child are attended to by the local midwife. On the fifth day after birth *Pachora* is observed and the name of the child is selected by the maternal uncle. Mundan or tonsure ceremony is observed during fifth or seventh year. Birth pollution for the child and other members of the family is twelve days while for mother it extends to forty days.

Marriages are solemnised at the residence of the bride. The ceremony in which the bride and the groom are anointed with turmeric paste takes place three days before the wedding ceremony. A necklace of glassbeads is tied around the neck of the bride and the couple are taken to the threshold of the house around which they walk four times, throwing rice grains over each other every time. Later they go into the kitchen and walk four times around the hearth. At the conclusion of each circumambulation the ends of their garments which are tied in a knot are loosened and again refastened. Two dancers lifting the bride and the groom on their shoulders dance. The bride goes to the house of her husband the same day. She returns on the fifth day and finally joins her husband afterwards. The consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's house.

The dead are cremated, but in case of death of children and pregnant women they bury. On way to the cremation ground, the son of the deceased places a small stone, a lump of cooked rice and drinking water. Cremation takes place after this. Ashes are immersed in water and at night a lighted earthen lamp along with food and water are placed on the spot where the deceased breathed his last. On the third day or twelfth day *khatran* or a small stone slab is installed as a memorial and a community feast is arranged. The *khatran* is worshipped along with all the other family deities.

The major economic resource is land. Individual ownership has been accorded following the amendment of the Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1955 which came into force on first

of August, 1956, which provided land to the tillers. The community are a combination of both land-owning and landless groups. Agriculture is the main stay of their economy. The system of tenancy and share-cropping exists within a system in which the rental that a tenant has to pay for a piece of land is fixed by an oral agreement the payment itself called *ganot*. Landlessness and the number of agricultural labourers, increased from the year 1920, when absentee landlords slowly acquired and increased their possessions. The land in the possession of money lenders went up by three times between 1906-1929. This was due to the famine of 1900 when most of the *Adivasis* had to borrow large amounts for their livelihood, mortgaging lands for a period of ten to twenty years.

The Choudhuries have their traditional *jati panchayat*. The *Karbhari* is the village headman. Sometimes he also act as a *Bhagat* i.e. traditional medicine man. The panchayat comprise the *Karbhari* and heads of households. It settles disputes between the members of the community. The *Police Patel* is another important office in the village. He was responsible for maintenance of law and order and collection of government revenue. A *Police Patel* holds office for a term of five years but generally it is extended for many years so much so that it has become hereditary. The Statutory panchayat is primarily concerned with the implementation of developmental schemes and arbitrate inter-community disputes.

The community was involved in the movement for Independence under the prominent national leader like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel etc. During the pre-Independence period, they organised reform movements against consumption of liquor and for the spread of education amongst them. They have been actively participating in the political affairs of the state.

The Chaudhuri are mainly Hindu although a few among them have converted to Christianity. A majority of this converted group is found in the area of Vavara, Songadh, Mandari etc. The Hindu Choudhurys worships a number of deities at the levels of the family, clan and village and at the regional level. The Christian converts however believe Jesus Christ, although they continue to participate in festivals in the village. They worship their ancestors on the eve of Diwali and Holi. Ahindo-Dev, the god of the hills, is considered their supreme God. Himaria-Dev is considered the

protector of fields and crops. Morkhi Mata is believed to look after the health of both human beings and cattle. The Choudhury also believe in spirits and ghosts. Mukri Mata, Kiliodio are the main spirits and are believed to cause various deceases like plague, fever, cholera, and even chattel's diseases. It is believed that one who commits suicide becomes a vampire. If a pregnant woman dies during labour or immediately after delivery she becomes *vantri* (witch). Traditional sacred specialist is known as a Bhuva who serves as a shaman.

The Chaudhuri do not accept water from the communities such as the Bhangi, Mochi, Rohit, Chamar etc. They have access to institutions such as the school, panchayat houses etc. They maintain socio-economic interdependence with non-tribal absentee landlords. They also serve in different Government and semi-Government organisations. They have regular contacts with other communities. Through political activities they have come to close interaction with several communities. Sardar Patel and Kasturba Gandhi organised them and initiated several reforms. The community revolted against the rulers of the Baroda state during the pre-independence period due to the deprivation of the right to distill liquor. The movement met with success. The community has a number of political leaders and social workers at the state and national levels. A community leader has held the office of state Chief Minister.

The rate of literacy among the Choudhurys is much higher than the average tribal literacy rate in the state. Education of this tribal group began when the then Vadodara state set up a residential school in Songadh for the tribals in 1885. The school, provided not only free tuition but also boarding, loading and clothing facilities to the students. Such schools also appeared in latter year. They favour family planning programmes and use modern methods of birth control. Drinking water is available within the locality. They take advantage of rural employment guarantee scheme. They use electricity and firewood, coal, kerosene etc. are the fuels used by them. They avail of the facilities extended through the public distribution system and have favourable attitude towards saving in banks.

N.K. Ghatak

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CHUNARA

The Chunara are called as such because of their occupation of making *chuna* (lime). They are believed to have migrated from Rajasthan and joined the army of former princely state of Baroda. But, as the legend goes, due to some unreasonable demands of the Naiks in the camp, they left the service and gradually learnt to make lime, in the lime-kilns, from the Vanzara community about five generations back. The Chunaras are spread rather sparsely in many parts of Saurashtra. They speak only Gujarati and use the Gujarati script.

The Chunara are vegetarian, their staple cereals like wheat and rice which are taken alongwith different types of pulses and vegetables. They consume liquor in liberal quantities and the use of milk and milk products is common.

There are no subgroups among the Chunara. The community has *Sakhs* (branches) which are equal to each other. These shakhs indicate descent and regntate marital alliances. They consider themselves as one of the *ter-tansdigroups* and claim to be Kshatriyas.

Sakh exogamy is strictly observed. Marriageable ages are 22 and 25 for males and females respectively. Monogamy is the norm. Junior levirate and junior sorrorate are permitted. A sum of Rs. 500/- is fixed as bride-price. Divorce is rare and remarriage of divorcees is permitted. A widow with children is not permitted to remarry. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Incidents of men staying with the wife's family (*ghar-jamai*) are rare.

A majority of the Chunara families are joint extended type. Succession is through the male line while property is inherited by the sons and shared equally among them.

Women do not have right to parental property and they are engaged in limekilns and agricultural work. Women have a low status to that of men.

After delivery, the baby is bathed and on the sixth day after birth, the *Chhathi* ceremony is performed after which the father's sister names the baby. *Tonsure* ceremony is performed before the *kula devi* (family deity) on the completion of either five weeks or six

months or twelve months. Marriage starts with *Ganapati Pujan* (Ganapati worship) raising a pavilion (*mandap sthapan*), *chakla-pujan* (worship of potter's wheel) and ends with *hasta melap* (meeting of hands) and the *pheras* (going round the holy fire). After worshipping *kula-devi*, consummation of marriage takes place, at her father-in-law's house.

On death, the body is bathed, and all the relatives take bath before the body is carried away on a bier to the cremation ground. Four coconuts, in case of females are hanged on the four corners of bier. The pall-bearers have to wear sacred thread. The mortuary rites are observed on the ninth day for females and on the eleventh day for males. Rice-balls are offered during *shraddha* ceremony held six or twelve months after the death. Upto three years after the death rice balls are offered to the departed in the month of *Bhadra*.

Some families own the lime-kilns employing other Chunara families to work in them. Making and selling of lime is a profitable business. Women participate in all these activities. Child labour is prevalent.

There is no formal caste council, but informally the caste elders adjudicate the disputes of the community members and their orders are obeyed. They do not have representations in the statutory gram-panchayats.

They are Hindus by religion. Every *Sakh* has a *kula-devi*, who is worshipped on every occasion by the *Bhuva* (witch-doctor) medium. *Bhuva* is chosen based on ordeals. Dependence of community members on *Bhuva* for some of their social-spiritual needs is total. Shiva, Rama, Krishna are popular among gods of wider Hindu pantheon. Hinglaj mata is the popular deity. They observe all Hindu festivals and faiths. On death they visit pilgrimage centres to perform *Shraddh* ceremony.

Chunara are considered a group aligned to Rajput castes. They are one of the *ter-tasili* groups. Inter linkage with people outside their groups are limited to the work-place and the market.

The literacy-rate among them is very low. In the event of physical ailments, they depend on the *Bhuva* (religious functionary). Some of them have taken the benefit of government loans. Few of their households have availed of electricity. They avail of public distribution system and banking facilities.

P. B. S. V. Padmanabham

DABGAR

The Dabgar uses 'Dabgar' as a surname. Their profession is the manufacture of certain types of musical instruments. Their original habitat was Pawagarh in Baroda district. The community dispersed from their home as a consequence of Muslim invasion and settled in parts of Ahmedabad. They are found in Dabgar and Sarnagpur area of Ahmedabad city and also in Surat and Baroda. Some account of the origins as a community is recalled in their oral tradition. They communicate in Gujarati and use the Gujarati script. They also can speak in Hindi.

They are vegetarian. The staple food is wheat and rice, along with pulses like *gram*, *tur*, *moong* and peas. They use groundnut oil as the cooking medium. Vegetables roots and tubers are also consumed. They are habituated to tea, but also take milk and milk products, smoke bidi and cigarettes. They chew betel nut and women use snuff. Some drink liquor secretly.

They have social divisions based on clans which are exogamous. The clans are Parmar, Rathor, Modi, Dabgar and Chhatriwals and are differentiated at social, occupational and territorial level. The function of the clan is to regulate marriage alliances. Dabgars perceive themselves to be of low social status at the regional level. Neighbouring communities also regard them as of low social status. They are aware of *Varna* system, and place themselves in the *Shudra* category.

The Dabgar are an endogamous community. Consanguinity is permissible and adult marriage is the rule. Age at marriage is 18 to 19 years for girls and 20 to 21 years for boys. Negotiation is the common mode of matrimony. Monogamy is the usual form of marriage. Junior levirate and sororate are allowed. The marriage symbol for women which is strictly observed is bangles, *Kanyadan* is prevailing among them. Dowry payment in kind exists. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce is permissible, the major factor leading to divorce is mainly maladjustment between couples. There is no system of divorce compensation or settlement

however, through either party can initiate a divorce. Children remain the liability of the father in such cases. There is no prohibition on the remarriage of a widow, widower and divorcee. The marriageable age has gone up considerably of late. Correspondingly there is also an increase in the incidence of divorcee due to mal-adjustment.

Mixed extended type of family is predominant within the community. Avoidance relationships exist between a daughter-in-law and her father-in-law and with her brother-in-law, i.e. husband's elder brother. Joking relationships exists between a man and the wife of his elder brother. Although family relationships are likely close and well-knit likely there may develop a confrontation and conflict within the family mainly on account of the generation gap. Although the old habits of sharing the good and bad times together continue yet traditional ties based on obligation and respect for elders on the wane. Despite this however linkages between the Dabgar families continue to be close sustained by the practice of visiting each other. Family patterns however are changing with nuclear families becoming increasingly common.

Inheritance is based on the principle of male equigeniture. Women are not eligible to inherit new deceased father's property. They however play an important role within the family fetching fuel and potable water in the villages. They are also actively insolved in the manufacture of musical instruments and contribute towards the family income. They have a specific role in social and religious spheres, but they are not interested in making their voices heard in the mehanism of social and political control of the community. Men discuss with the women folk family problems and disputes and seek their opinion but women do not have any decision-making power. Neither do they control family expenditure and the status of women is low in the Dabgar society.

Srimanta, a pre-delivery ritual popularly known as *khol bharna* (lap-filling) is performed at the husband's house in the event of the first pregnancy of a woman. The father visits his pregnant daughter and presents her clothes and money. Some restriction is observed on movement of the expectant mother and she is provided with nutrititious food. The mid-wife who conducts the delivery, cuts the child's umblical cord and buries it in front of the house. *Chhathi puja* (worship of gooddness of Destiny) is

performed on the sixth day after birth in the belief, as goddess of destiny writes the child's future on that day. On an auspicious day, generally on the twelfth day after birth, naming ceremony of the child takes place, the name conferred by the aunt or the father's sister. Brahmans are consulted for this purpose. The first delivery itself takes place in the natal home of the woman. She returns to her husband's home three months after birth along with the child and gifts given to her by her parents. *Mundan* (tousure) ceremony takes place in the second or third year only in the case of males. The tousure done by a barber is performed near a well, prayers being offered on this occasion.

Matrimonial alliances decided upon by parents and initiated through proposals from the party of the prospective bride. When finalised, the father of the girl presents utensils, clothes and sweets. Sugar or *gur* is distributed among relatives and neighbours. Two or three days before the wedding, *Ganapati* worship is performed in the houses of the prospective couple. A paste made of turmeric powder and oil is rubbed on the body of the bride and groom also one or two days before the marriage. The maternal uncle of the bride and his wife bring the wedding saree and ornaments. Similarly the bride-groom also receives presents from his maternal uncle. The marriage takes place at the bride's residence with the bride groom arriving in a procession with relatives and accompanied by music and drums to a warm welcome by the parents of the bride and her male relatives. The bride groom is received ceremoniously by the bride's mother. A Brahman priest officiates at the ceremony performed around the sacred fire or *vivaha* home. The father of the bride hands over his daughter to the bridegroom. The hands of the bride and groom are tied with a cloth. The couple repeat the incantations uttered by priest and circumambulate the fire four times to consummate marriage. This is followed by some minor ceremonies such as washing feet, honey sipping, the showering of rice and gift giving. The ceremony concludes with a feast hosted by the parents of the bride for all assembled relatives and friends. The couple and *barat* return to the residence of the bridegroom's parents, where they are received ceremoniously by the bridegroom's mother, to the accompaniment of singing and dance.

The dead are cremated. Water of the Ganga is sprinkled on the

mouth of the deceased on his last breath. Relatives and neighbours assemble immediately on news of death and prepare the bier to carry the body to the cremation ground. Women do not go to cremation ground nearby walking a little distance beyond the house and returning after bathing at a near-by well. Males remain at the cremation ground till the body is fully cremated. Bones and ashes are collected by the eldest son three days later to be immersed in the river Saraswati. Memorial rites are observed on the thirteenth day when *sapindakaran* (oblation to the deceased members) is performed whereby the dead severs all earthly connections and joins the *pitru* (forefathers). Various articles of daily utility are gifted to the family priest so that the deceased may enjoy them in another world. A feast '*Mrutyu Bhoj*' is arranged by the deceased's family for relatives and friends. Memorial rites are also observed after one year known as *Varsi*.

The Dabgars are a landless community, the land being mainly controlled by the Patels. The traditional and present occupation of the community is the manufacture of musical instruments. They also make umbrellas, which would be sold in the market through cash transactions. They depend totally on the market for their livelihood, both for buying their raw materials as well as disposing of the finished product viz. Musical instruments and umbrellas. Some Dabgars own their establishments through which sales are made to consumers directly or to wholesalers who in turn retail it. While a majority of the Dabgars adhere to their traditional livelihood, some of them are engaged in services of various categories, especially as labourers is not prevalent to the community and mode of payment of wages is in cash.

The Dabgars have a caste council or *panch*, the members of which are selected by mutual consensus. The head of this council is called *Mukhia*. The members of the community can place before the *panch* mutual disputes, pleas for divorce cases, of violation of norms of the community. In cases of divorce, the *panch* enters into dialogue with the couple in a bid for compromise. Violation of the community's norms are severely dealt with and the offender is fined an amount of Rs. 51/- and sometimes excommunicated from Dabgar society in case of serious offences. The primary function of the *panch* is to retain a total grip over the community in such a way that the common traditions and values are respected

by its members. The role of post- Independence statutory panchayat is to plan and implement developmental activities.

The Dabgar profess Hinduism, worshipping the various gods of the Hinduism like Vishnu, Shiva and Sreenathji. They worship these deities for the protection and well being of the household. Some of them are followers of the Swami Narayan sect also worshipping Radhakrishna in the Swami Narayan temple. There is a Swaminarayan temple in their area of inhabitation in Dabgarwad, which is visited by the Dabgar families. Their sacred specialists are Brahmans who perform various life-cycle rites. The Dabgar also attend various religious fares both for religious as well as economic reasons.

Although the community is well known for the manufacture of musical instruments especially percussion instruments which they use in their entertainment of singing and dancing, they are not known otherwise as specializing in any distinctive craft or artistic tradition including folk songs, and folk tales.

The Dabgar themselves are not very conscious of the *varna* system freely exchanging food and water with the other neighbouring communities within their habitat partly due to the exigencies of urbanisation and modernisation. However marriage alliances contracted outside the community are treated as violation of norms.

Educational facilities are available to the community. Males go in for higher education and some graduates including engineers, doctors and teachers are to be found amongst them. Some boys however drop-out because they have to earn to support their families. Girls are educated only upto the primary level, on account of social reasons. The community derives the benefits of public medical facilities available in their area mainly because of their favourable attitude towards modern medicare. The Dabgars display a positive attitude towards the concept of planned families with limiting new family to two children. Generally, males get sterilised. They are exposed to modern media of communication such as radio, cinema and television and also to political information. The Dabgars themselves have sent up a number of men of the community to the Legislative Assembly. They make full use of modern communication facilities such as roads and railways. Their children benefit from mid-day meal in school and from the ICDS

feeding and immunization programmes. Fairprice shops for are made use of. The attitude towards savings is favourable and they do not depend on money-lenders and shop-keepers for loans.

S.R. Maitra

D.K. Nanda

DAFER

The Dafer are distributed in the Jhalawar and Saurashtra regions of Gujarat. They claim to have migrated from Sindh to Saurashtra via Kutch. Both Hindu and Muslim Dafers are settled in Saurashtra though Muslims outnumber Hindu Dafers. They are settled in Vanthali and Talala talukas of Junagadh district. In Talala they live in two villages, Javuntri and Valchel in temporary settlements for they still pursue a nomadic way of life. They are known as hunters and also for their criminal tendencies. They speak Kachhi dialect within the kin-circle and Gujarati with outsiders. They use the Gujarati script. The Dafer males wear a colorful *lungi*, shirt and *safa* (turban) while the females wear dark colored *ghagra*, *kapadu* (sleeve-less blouse) and *odhani*. Boys usually wear *chaddi* (shorts) *kamiz* (shirts) and the girls wear broad *ghagra*, *polkun* (blouse) and *odhni* or (veil). Generally males wear merely a *tabij* (amulet) around their necks which they obtain from a *Pir* or a *Fakir*. Females wear *chhada* (necklace).

They are non-vegetarian. They consume the meat of the *sasla* (wild hare) and different types of birds in addition to mutton, chicken and beef though refrain from pork. Staple cereals include *bajra* and rice along with pulses and vegetables locally available. Tea is a common beverage while butter-milk and goats milk are taken with meals. Alcohol is consumed, *bidi* and cigarette also are smoked but fruits eaten only rarely. Their favorite dish prepared on ceremonial occasion is rice and mutton, *bakra-ki-akhni*.

A number of surnames or *sakh* are used along with their names like Nathwani, Ladak, Nagori, Mori, Somma, Kharwa, Chhar, Ker, Rathore, Lakha, Kharia etc, the meaning and origin of which are unknown.

The Dafer practice endogamy, and generally marriages take place within a kin-group. Both parallel—and cross-cousin marriages are allowed with girls marrying around the age of 16 years while for boys it varies between 20 to 22 years. While monogamy is the common form a few of them entered into polygynous wed-lock

also Arranged marriages are practised but self-arranged marriages are also allowed. Married women do not observe any specific symbol of married status. System of *mehar* is prevalent in the society and a sum of rupees fifty one is fixed for this purpose. Marriage gifts are given according to one's financial position and residence after marriage is patrilocal. A man has a right to divorce his wife, the practice being called *chhutachhenra*. When a person utters the word *talaq* (divorce) three successive times, it is taken as a final verdict for the same. The head-man of the community is informed. A divorced woman is generally maintained by her husband for a period of three months or the *iddat*. *Debartani* (levirate) and *ghorghons* (sorrorate) unions also occur among the Dafer. Both men and women are permitted to remarry in cases of divorce and widowhood. It is called *dayapara* and it takes place without any elaborate ceremony. Cases of divorce and polygynous unions have considerably reduced in recent times due to social consciousness.

Nuclear type of family is more common than the extended family. Joking relationships exist between a wife and the younger brothers and sisters of her husband. Similarly avoidance relationships are maintained between a wife and the father and elder brother of her husband. Conflict and confrontations within the family takes place on property matters. The right of inheritance is through the male line only. However, *doani* (a share of the husband's property) is given to a widow.

Women of the community enjoy better status compared to their counterparts from other communities. They do not have the right of inheritance in their father's property. Women are mainly engaged in domestic and family duties. Some of them are also agricultural labourers. They actively participate in all the social ceremonies but never in political activities.

A pregnant woman is not permitted to undertake manual labour. She mostly stays in the house till confinement, in order to protect herself from evil spirits. During the seventh month of the first pregnancy *kholo bharo* (lap filling), is performed after which she is sent to her father's house. Delivery takes place in the house with the assistance of a mid-wife. The umbilical cord is buried in the back-yard of the house. *Ajan* (a prayer) immediately after birth is whispered in to the ears of the new born child by a male

member. Early in the morning of the sixth day, both mother and the child are given bath and dressed in new clothes. The child is named in a ceremony called *chhatti*. On the 21st day *aquiqa* ceremony takes place when a goat is sacrificed. All the guests are entertained to a feast and *akhni* is served. The *khatna* (circumcision) ceremony, takes place for the male child between six months and ten years, by the local barber. Marriage ceremony generally takes place in two phases, the first being *magni* (betrothal) and the other *sadi* or the actual marriage. On the occasion of *magni* no ceremony takes place. Only *gur* (jaggery) being distributed among the neighbors. Three days before marriage *pithi* ceremony, in which both the prospective bride-groom and bride areointed with a turmeric and oil paste, is observed at both houses. Women sing folk songs on this occasion. On the day of the marriage, *mandovo* (marriage booth) is erected in the bride's house. The groom adorns with new clothes, a turban and a sword on his waist. In the evening bridegroom goes to bride's place with *jan* (wedding procession) who is welcomed by the female relations and the mother of the bride at the entrance of the village. The *Kaji* solemnises the marriage as per Islamic rites. It is followed by the marriage feast while all through women sing folk songs. The *jan* with the couple leave the next morning for their own village, where in turn they are welcomed by the female relations and the mother of the bride-groom. Due to rising prices and restricted means they have to economise the marriage expenses.

The Dafer bury their dead in their burial ground. The body is washed with hot water and covered in new white clothes. The coffin is carried to the burial ground by relatives and neighbours. *Fateha* is recited when the body is lowered into the grave. *Jiyarat* is observed on the third day after death attended by all the villagers. No food is prepared in the house till this ceremony is over.

Their traditional primary occupations was hunting and criminal activities. It may be mentioned that in Gujarat earlier dacoities have come to be mainly associated with the Dafer community. However, this community at present has taken to agricultural and casual labour work. They dispose off part of their produce through the market to consumers, mainly Muslims and Hindus belonging to the lower social strata. In the village Valchal of Talala taluka,

all the Dafer families are now engaged in agricultural activities, but the Dafer of *Javunti* still hunt for their subsistence.

The Dafer do not have any organized traditional council or *jamat*. As a result, conflict and confrontation are very frequent within the Dafer, even among their close kin-circle. They live in small groups headed by a *Mukhia* (leader) who settles group conflicts. They never approach the statutory panchayat or police station, because of their background. In the village Valchel where they are a small group, some sort of social relations are maintained with the local Muslims and lower class Hindu. The Dafer society is not stable so far, because they are not united and also because of their temporary settlements. However, they are trying to organize a caste council.

The Dafer belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. Though they are not very religiously inclined, they have faith in *pirs* (Muslim saint) and *paigambars* (prophet). In times of crisis they go to a *Fakir* and obtain *tabij* (talisman) which they tie around their neck. They rarely visit a mosque to offer *namaz*. However, they observe the fast of Ramzan. Though only a few actually visit the *dargah* (shrines of *Pirs*).

The Dafer, who are associated with agricultural activities, maintain a good relation with the Sindhis and other Muslims who engage their services during peak agricultural operations. Those who are still hunting and in the habit of stealing, keep some contact with the Meghwals and Harijans who generally dispose off their stolen goods. They take all types of food from any caste but never depend on alms. Because of their criminal habits, their social status is very low and are denied access to the wells of the village community. They come in contact with the Lohanas and Banias for shopping and marketing purpose.

The rate of literacy and education among the Dafers is low as reported in the village Valchel where only six students have registered their name in the primary school. They do not show any awareness in respect of formal education. They avail of medical facilities in the local health centre at Talala only when they are seriously ill. Fire-wood, *chhania* cow-dung are mainly used as fuel for cooking. For lighting purposes they use a small *diya* or oil-lamps. Mid-day meal is served to the students under the nutritional programmes, of the State Government. Public

distribution system is available in the locality. Due to lack of formal education and unity among the members of the society, they are not able to share in the achievements of different developmental programmes so far. They are living in almost complete social isolation, in and around the Gir forest.

Joytirmay Chakraborty

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DAMOR

The Damor are also known as Damaria. Vyas and Mann (1966) refers to Damors as a section of the Bhils. In Gujarat the Damors are mainly distributed in Sabarkantha and Panchmahal districts. The Damor claim that they are the descendants of Rajput rulers. Mann (1966) further pointed out that Damors have some Rajput like gotras and there may be the possibility that in the past some Rajput might have married Bhil girls and in course of time their progeny formed a separate group. The Damors speak in Gameti dialect within their kin group and use Gujarati while talking with the outsiders. Gujarati script is used.

The Damors are non-vegetarian in food habits but the *Bhagats* do not consume non-vegetarian food. Their staple food consists of *jowar* (apiked millet) and maize. Tea is taken but not regularly. *Chhas* or butter milk is also consumed. Groundnut oil is used as medium of cooking. Pulses, like *tur*, *urad*, *moong*, *masur* etc., roots and tubers are consumed. Their men take alcohol quite often. Fruit consumption is occasional. Consumption of non-vegetarian food has also decreased because of their poor economic condition and spread of Bhagatism. They smoke *bidi* (country made cigarette) and chew tobacco regularly.

The Damors have several exogamous clans such as Parmer Sisodia, Rathod, Chauhan, Solanki, Saradia, Kharadi etc.,. The clans enjoy equal status, with their main function being to regulate marriage alliances and to indicate descent and ancestry. In the local social hierarchy they regard themselves as intermediary group but other communities place them lower in the social order.

The Damors are an endogamous community and maintain clan exogamy in marriage alliances. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. Mainly they practise adult marriage. Child marriage is also practiced. Marriage mostly takes place either by negotiation between parents or by mutual consent of the individuals concerned. Sororal (junior) marriage is permissible. Women do not exhibit any specific symbol of married status. Bride-price is paid mostly in cash

but gifts are also given to the bride. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Dissolution of marriage mostly takes place due to adultery and maladjustment between spouses. Either party has the right to seek divorce. If a woman elopes then her newly-wedded husband compensates her former husband with a sum double the amount of the bride price. If she deserts then her parents return the bride price to the husband. Widow, widower and divorcees are permitted to remarry. Widow remarriage is called *natra*.

Both nuclear and extended types of families are found to exist among the Damors. Avoidance relationships are maintained between daughter-in-law and father-in-law, younger brother's wife and husband's elder brother. Joking relations exist between grand parents and grand children, between sister-in-law and brother-in-law. Right of inheritance is enjoyed by the sons only and succession is through the eldest son. The sons share the property equally.

A Damor woman hold secondary status to that of a man. They participate in agricultural, social, ritual and other economic activities too. The head of the family, who is always a male, takes the decision in all socio-economic matters through. The women control family expenditure.

The Damor have rituals performed during the time of pregnancy, birth marriage and death. For the first delivery, the expectant mother goes to her paternal house. The delivery takes place within the dwelling unit conducted by an experienced mid-wife. Birth pollution lasts for a period of forty days. On the sixth day after birth, *chhatti* ceremony is performed. Both the mother and the child are given purificatory bath and new clothes to wear. The child is named on that day after due consultation with a Brahman priest. *Mundan* or tonsure ceremony is observed in case of male children only.

Marriage among the Damor take place in two phases, the first one is *magni* i.e., announcement of the final settlement of the marriage alliance. The second being *sadi*, the performance of actual marriage ritual, the date for which is fixed in consultation with a Brahman priest. Three to four days before marriage, *pithi* ceremony is observed in the houses of both the bride and the groom. Marriage ceremony is solemnized by a Brahman priest at the residence of the bride. On the day of marriage *mandavo*

(marriage booth) is erected in front of the house. The relatives and associates of the groom are entertained to a grand feast. The ceremonial send-off to the groom alongwith his newly wedded wife takes place the next morning. The ceremony itself is called *bidai*. Before they start with journey the bride and the groom visit the maternal uncle of the bride to receive *mameru* (marriage gifts given by the maternal uncle), usually, utensils. Consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's place.

The Damor cremate their dead. Close relatives and neighbours carry the body to the cremation ground where it is given a ritual bath and wrapped in a shronal and placed on the pyre for cremation. Food is not cooked in the house of the deceased. Cooked food is sent by the nearest kin. *Khatariya* ritual is observed on the tenth day when all the male members of the family get their hair shaved off. On the thirteenth day, *terma*, a death-feast is arranged. This marks the end of pollution period. Succession rites are performed on this day. The person who dies of small pox or due to snake-bite, is buried. Ashes are immersed in a river.

The Damors are mainly settled agriculturist and hence land is their main resource. They have a combination of both the land-owning and landless members also. Both men and women take active part in the agricultural operations and child labour also exists. Now-a-days a few Damors are to be found in white collar jobs, in the Taluka Panchayat office, or as teachers in schools. There is a rise in the number of agricultural labourers among them. Some are working in the industrial urban area.

Patel or *Mukhi* (headman) settles all the socio-economic disputes within the community with the help of *panch* (council of elders). The *jati-panch* is now a formal organization the office bearers of which are also elected. In case of any conflict, quarrels, adultery, rape, theft etc. they approach the community panchayat. The statutory Panchayat takes up welfare and development activities.

The religious life of the Damors has been greatly influenced by their Hindu neighbours. They worship Rama, Krishna, Gangamata, Kalkamata and other divinities of the Hindu pantheon, besides their own local deities like *Ramdeoji*, *Khatrimata* etc. *Khatrimata* is worshipped to protect the cows. They also offer goats and cocks to propitrate the deities at the time of Navaratra. They believe in the existence of ghosts and evil spirits. The sacred specialists are

called *Bhagat* or *Bhopa*. The life of the Damors has been Hinduised by the impact of Bhagat movement (Mann; 1986). Rituals and ceremonies are solemnised with the help of Brahmin priests. They pay visits to local pilgrimage spots like Ambaji, Shamlaji etc.

The community has songs and tales which are sung by their women folk on various social and religious occasions.

They accept both cooked and uncooked foods from the higher castes such as Brahman, Vania, Patidar etc, but not from Scheduled castes like Vankar, Bhangi and Chamar. For economic purposes they maintain close relationship with the Thakarada and Dungri Garasia communities of this region. They do not establish matrimonial relations with members of other communities. They share the facilities of well and other water resources, roads, school, panchayat office with other communities. While going on pilgrimage, they usually accompany members of other communities of the village or region. From amongst the Damors, very few business men have emerged.

Formal education for boys is favored by them though in case of girls they are not very enthusiastic. Generally, a boy studies upto secondary level while girls only upto the primary level. They use both modern and traditional medicinal systems. Their attitude towards family planning is positive. They use both modern and indigenous methods of family planning. Handpumps, tubewells and canals are the sources of drinking water. A few of them have benefitted from the Integrated Rural Development Project. They use electricity kerosene oil, fire-wood, cow-dung-cakes are their main fuel resources, the most important is of course wood. They avail of irrigation facilities from canals, wells and rivers. The Damors use organic manure, chemical fertilizers, insecticides etc. Their children avail facilities of mid-day meal scheme in the school. They avail of the facility from the public distribution system through fair-price shops. Several of them are dependent on money lenders and shop keepers when faced with financial crisis.

Jyotirmay Chakraborty

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DANGASHIA

The Dangashia is the wool-knitting community. The story about the origin of the community says that there was a Bharwad, who had three sons. One day the elder brother's wife asked her husband's younger brother to dispose off a dead animal. But younger brother initially refused but lastly he had cleared the dead animal by his *dang* (stick). Since then that man was treated as very low because he had touched the dead animal. As he had cleared the dead animal by *dang* or stick he was named as Dangashia. The Dangashias are the descendants of that fallen Bharwad. Dangashias are distributed in Surendranagar district. They speak and write in Gujarati. Their women wear woolen *ramraj*, *lungi*, *kapdu* or *choli*, and white ivory bangles. Men wear *pagri* or turban which has a red border and *Kataria*, silver plate on the wrist and *kandora*. (a thick silver chain).

The Dangashia are vegetarian and the staple food being *bajra*, *jowar* and wheat. They consume all types of pulses except *masur*. Ground nut oil is used as cooking medium. They take seasonal vegetables. Consumption of milk and milk products are rare because of poverty.

They have exogamous *ataks* like. Parmar, Garelia Parmer, Rathod, Jharia Rathod, Keria Yadav, Uchhal Yadav, Vinshan Yadav, Thorana Yadav etc. Each and every *atak* has its separate deities and separate *Bhuva*.

Marriages are settled through negotiation. Age of marriage for boys is about 18 to 19 years and for girls 15 to 16. Bride price is paid in cash and kind. Symbols of marriage for woman are *Safed chudiya* or ivory bangles and the keeping of *ghunghat*, (veil) and one golden armlet. Remarriage is permitted for a divorcee or widow. Remarriage (*ghar gharnu*) takes place at midnight in the presence of a few near relatives.

Extended families are prevalent but nuclear families also co-exist. Joking relations exists between a woman and younger brother of her husband. She has joking relations with her husband's

younger brother and sister. The daughter-in-law has avoidance relationship with her husband's father as well as elder brother. Sons inherit the parental property and share equally. Succession is through eldest son. Inter-family linkages are good. Women have no right to inherit property.

Women enjoy secondary status compared to that of their men. Women assist in the making of woolen yarn by *charkha* (spinning wheel) and also in processing of the woolen fiber. They also collect rough unprocessed wool from the Bharwad. Some of them also design and knit *shawls*, woolen *Jimmi*, *lungi*, *odhni* etc. Sometimes they go out for casual labour work also and contribute to the their family income. The women have roles in case of various ritual activities.

Seemant ceremony, is performed in the seventh month of pregnancy at the husband's home. Mother of the pregnant woman comes with a few gifts. Sister of her husband presents the pregnant woman with some rice, a coconut and sweets which are placed in her lap. After this the pregnant woman is taken to her parent's house for the delivery, which takes place at home with the help of a mid-wife. The child's mother preserves the umbilical chord and keeps it in a safe place till the child is grown up. On the sixth day after birth the child is bathed. On this day the naming ceremony is also performed. The sister of the child's father announces the name of the child. Post-delivery pollution period is observed for a month and ten days. The Barot make entry of the new born in his genealogical record. The tonsure ceremony of the male child is done after a year.

Sagai (betrothal) takes place a year before marriage. The singing of songs is an essential part in marriage. On the day of marriage they first invoke lord Ganapati within the *mandap* (marriage booth). The mother and other female relatives do *chakla puja*, (worship of potter's wheel). They apply turmeric paste or *pithi* on the body of the bride and groom separately. Marriage take place at the girl's house. The girl's father performs *kanyadan* and the boy's father has to give bride price to the family of the girl. The bride and the groom take *phera* or circumambulate the sacrificial fire four items. Consummation of marriage take place on that very day in the house of the groom.

They bury their dead. The body is bathed in a sitting posture

and is dressed in new clothes. A bamboo is tied to each of the four corner of the bier. They carry fire from their home but at the burial place the son merely touches the fire on the first toe of the right leg after which the body is lowered into the grave. The grave is then covered with salt and soil with the eldest son being the first to do so. The corpse of a married woman is covered with red cloth for the unmarried it is green and a white silken cloth is used in the case of males. Mourning period lasts twelve days when the *barmu* and *shraddha* ceremonies are performed. In case of death of a child below five years, no death rituals are observed. They bury dead pregnant women after removing the child from her womb. They bury it with the mother at the same grave.

Their traditional occupation is mainly wool weaving. They take rough unprocessed wool from the Bharwad community and process it on the *charkha*. The manufactured items are then sold to Bharwad community directly. They take loans from *Mahajan* (money-lenders) and in that case they are sell their material to the *Mahajan* only. Dangashia are mainly a landless community. In Surendranagar, the government has rehabilitated them. Young boys operate the weaving machines. Both women and men go for daily wage labour in mills and factories.

They have traditional *jati panch* (caste council) comprising of the community members from the neighboring villages. Disputes regarding remarriage, divorce, education of children and property are settled by this *jati panch* which also enforces caste discipline. Occasionally they arrange for get-togethers or *sabha* to decide on different welfare activities.

The Dangashia are Hindus. They are devotees of Lord Krishan, but they observe all the Hindu fairs and festivals. Each clan has its own *kuladevi* and its *Bhuva* is concerned with the performance of rites. These deities are woshipped during Navratri and on the occassion of life-cycle rituals. The Dangashia worship Ramapir, Narshingavtar on Kalichaturdasi, Jodespir at the time of Duessehra etc. Their sacred specialist is Garodia Brahman. They also observe different festivals viz. Ganesh Chaturthi, Janmastami, Ramnavami, Makarshankranti, Uthasini, Shivaratri, Hanumanji etc. Somnath, Dwaraka, Brindavan etc. are the main sacred centers of pilgrimage. During Navaratro they dance the Dandiya.

The Brahman, Bania, Rajput, Lohana do not accept water from them. They have good linkages with the scheduled caste groups like Vankar, Harijan, Bhangi, Chamar etc. Although they believed to have branched off from Bharwad community, the Bharwads never takes water from Dangashia. Other trading castes maintain trade relations with them. They don't have connubial relations with any other community.

Literacy levels are low and females never go to school. Very few children attend primary school or *Bal-mandir*. But they learn the traditional skills at the age of ten to twelve years. They avail of modern medicare from hospital or government dispensary. Females go in for sterilization. Most of the Dangashia villages are now electrified. They avail of the facilities of IRDP and ICDS as also other government developmental schemes. They make use of public distribution system and take loans from Bank for weaving purposes.

Aditi Mukherjee

DASNAMI BAWA

The Dasanami are a sect of religious teachers and priests of small temples in the villages. The Dasnami are so called because of the ten surnames that exist in the community. The ten surnames are Giri, Parvat, Sagar, Bharati, Saraswati, Asan, Tirath, Ashram, Van, Puri. Dasnami community is one of the many communities that are referred to under a common generic term *Bawa*. They are also referred to as *Dasnami Goswami*. Their oral tradition recounts that their forefathers were the followers of Adi-Shankaracharya and they used to accompany him on his country-wide tours. After Shankara's death, having lost their leader they settled in different villages and in due course they got married and started leading a domestic life. They are distributed all over the state. They speak in Kathiawadi dialect and write Gujarat in the Gujarati script.

The Dasnami are vegetarians. They take lentils, garlic and onion. They take *bajra*, *jowar* and rice alongwith common pulses. Available vegetables they take. Fruit consumption is only occasional. Milk and milk products are sometimes taken. Consumption of alcohol is absent. Special food is given to pregnant women and nursing mothers.

The Dasnami Bawa enjoy a higher status. The ten different surnames mentioned under Dasnami are unequal in status. Bawa is one of the ter-tasili groups like Ahir, Bharwad, Charan, Rajput etc. So it is one of those groups of Rajput-Darbar - artisan castes which can take food together. They are considered inferior to the Rajputs and also to the artisan communities.

The Dasnami are now '*grihasta*' and lead a family life. Their surnames are exogamous in nature. Further the ten surnames are grouped into three in some places and four in others. But one can marry the daughter of ones mother's brother. Polygamy though permitted is rare. Levirate and sororate at junior levels are permitted. The marriage age for boys is 20 and girls 18 years. Marriages are generally arranged by negotiation. *Sagai* (betrothal) preceedes marriage and community marriages are in vogue. Bride-

price is paid before marriage. Wearing of *sari* and *odhni* alongwith specific behavioural patterns identify a married woman. Residence is partilocal. Divorce is sought through the '*Panch*' and remarriage is allowed for a divorcee widow and widower.

Extended families are common among them. Avoidance relations exist between father-in-law, elder brother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. Joking relations exist between the wife's younger sibs, elder brother's wife. Inheritance is based on the rule of male equigeniture. Sucession and descent is reckoned in the male line. Inter-family linkages are restricted to the members of the community.

Women do not have property rights. They are restricted to the household chores. They collect potable water and sometimes even fuel wood. They have an equal role in the ritual and religious affairs. There are instances when some Dasnami women took up the worship in the temples to which their husbands were once attached. They have a role in family management. However, women have a lower status to that of their men.

Seemanth also called *Khola-bharva* is arranged in the fifth or the seventh month of first pregnancy in her husband's house. The pregnant woman's lap is filled with sugar, rice, supari, betel leaves etc. On delivery, the child is bathed on that very day and *chhathi* is observed on the fifth or the sixth day depending on the sex of the child.

Marriage proceedings are initiated with *Ganapati puja* followed by *mandap sthapan*, *hast milap* and *phera-farvanu*. After that family deity is worshipped and then only consummation of marriage takes place at groom's place.

In the instance of death, the body is bathed in the sitting posture and wrapped in new clothes. The corpse is carried in a *joli* or *doli* in the *kayotsarga asana* style. The dead body is buried in the sitting posture and is covered with salt and earth to it. *Shradha* rites are observed on the twelfth day. Every year, on the day of death in the month of Bhadrava, the ancestors are worshipped and *shraddha* is offered.

The Dasnami are Shaivite priests in village temples. As there is only one temple, hardly one family can subsist on the village temple. Most of them depend on various other economic activities. Only a few own some land. Some of them are engaged in government and non-government service and few of them are

engaged in petty trade and others are wage-labourers. The temple priests are generally paid by the village community in kind.

Caste Council at local level and caste association at the regional levels exists. Five members form the executive of the caste council. They are nominated by a voice-vote. Cases of disputes, divorce, remarriage etc. are settled through these councils. The main and important activity of the caste association is to frame rules and regulations for the community and they run three community boarding houses and publish the caste journal '*Dasnami Goswami*' which contains general information about the community and the activities of its members and the association. They observe all Hindu festivals and visit sacred centres like Dwaraka, Somnath etc. *Hinglaj mata* is their patron deity and there are different *kula-devis* for every surname. Shivaratri, Navratri, Diwali are some of the important festivals that are celebrated by them. Brahmans are their sacred specialists.

Their women do embroidery, mirror-work and bead work. There are folk songs and folk tales specific to the community.

The Dasnami community members are drawn from different castes. Their relationship with other communities is cordial. They are one of the *ther-tasili* communities. They accept provisions from even the untouchables. It appears that Dasnami is a special group for the reason that it still keeps *jajman* relations alive in all villages where the Dasnami are settled. They are paid in *grain* at the time of harvest by every household in the village for the services they offer to the village temple.

Literacy is relatively high. Female education is totally neglected. They take the help of modern medicine to a large extent. Adoption of family planning methods is to the extent average. The beneficiaries of government schemes and IRDP are reportedly absent among them. Their children are sent to Anganwadi centres. The Dasnamis attached to temples live in the houses given to them. Drinking water facilities and electricity are available. They make use of public distribution system to a greater extent and banking facilities to a lesser extent.

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DEPALA

The Depalas derive its name from *dwataoak* or *dikhpal* or *depala* two feet because earlier they were caravan traders and wandering merchants of Gujarat. Other communities generally refer to them as *juari* (gambler) because they earn money by playing cards. They are distributed in Surendranagar, Ahmedabad and Kutch districts. Enthoven (1920) mentions that they have close similarity with Luhana and their ancestors inter-married. Two brothers Lakho and Damo came from Lohargad (Sind) to Shiahi, a village near Limbdi and hence went to Dhrangadhra. From Lakh descended the Lohanas and from Damo the Depalas. They speak in Gujarati and use Gujarati script for writing.

The Depela are vegetarian and consume wheat, bajra (millet), as well as rice. They consume pulses like *tur*, *var* and *urad*. Groundnut oil and palmoline oil are used for cooking food. They are habituated to take *pan* (betel leaf) and betel nut.

They have different religions sects like Shivpanthi, Swaminarayan Sampraday, Rampanthi etc. The Depala have different exogamous clans called *ataks*. Common clans are Raghauni, Jagarni, Sangarmi, Valani, Damani, Propatia, Pujara, Dagha, Rwatia, Damodoria etc. The Depala do not have any commensal relations with Lohanas. Depala consider themselves at par with the Lohana and Patels.

Marriages are arranged by families take place in the community, which are conducted according to Aryasamaj rites. Age at marriage for boys is 24/25 years and for females 18/20 years. '*Diervatu*' (levirate) and *salivatu* (sorrowrate) are permitted with some simple marriage rituals. The symbols of married woman are vermilion on hair parting and *bindi* on the forehead. Wearing of *mangalsutra* (marriage pendent) is a recent trend. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce and *ghar gharana* (remarriage) are permitted. Widow-remarriage is not permissible but widower remarriage is allowed. Post-divorce maintenance is given by the husband. Dowry is paid in kind.

Families are generally nuclear though there are few joint families. Avoidance relationship exists between mother-in-law and son-in-law, daughter-in-law and father-in-law. In the presence of father and mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law has to observe some restrictions, viz, she has to cover her head (*ghunghat* i.e., veil), and is not expected to speak loudly. Joking relationship exists between sister-in-law and husband's younger brother. Succession is through the eldest son. Sons inherit the property and share equally.

Women have a low status. They help to augment the family income by working as agricultural labourers. They collect fuel, fetch water etc. besides occupying themselves in household duties. Females are not allowed to take any decision, for which they have to depend on their husband.

Kholo - bharva or *seemanth* (pre-delivery) ritual is observed in the seventh month of the first pregnancy. On that day the mother of the pregnant woman comes with gifts. Her husband's younger brother slaps her jokingly with hands smeared with *kanku* or vermillion and her *nanad* (husband's sister) puts a betel nut and some rice and a few paise on the floor. The pregnant lady steps on it while *nanad* or sister-in-law collects them. A feast is arranged in which only *suhagans* (married women) are fed. *Chhatti* is observed on the sixth day after birth and on the eighth day the child is named by the elders of the family. The mother observes pollution period for a month. *Bal-muvanu* (tonsure) ceremony is observed after the fifth week. *Janey* (sacred thread) is worn by the males after the age of fifteen years or just before marriage.

Before marriage *sagai* (betrothal) takes place at the bride's house. A Brahman priest fixes the *muharat* or (auspicious time) for marriage. Three days before the marriage, *pithi* (turmeric paste) is applied to boy and girl. *Mandap* (marriage booth) is erected at both the girl's and boy's house and the priest does *Ganapathi sthapna*. The boy's mother performs *chakla puja*. In the evening *barat* (marriage procession) from the groom's residence goes to the bride's house. The marriage is officiated by a Brahman priest. The bride and groom circumambulate four times the sacred fire. This is called *mangal pher*, *Kanyadan*, *Sampradan* of the girl, have to be done by the girl's father or brother. *Sindurdan* (applying

vermilion on the parting of the brides hair) takes place. The bridegroom takes the bride to his house. Consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's house.

In the instance of death, the dead is laid on the floor. After bathing the body it is covered with new clothes and four *srifal* (coconut), one *agarbatti* (incense stick) is placed on the *thatdi* (bier). The body is carried on a bamboo bier to the *smasan* (cremation ground). The corpse is laid on the pyre in such a way that the head faces north. The eldest or any other son after taking five rounds of the funeral pyre put fire on the first toe of the right leg. After cremation, the eldest son collects the ashes in an earthen pot and on the *agiarmi* (eleventh day) he immerses it in Saraswati and Narmada water in case of female and male deceased respectively. *Karma Sardha* is observed on the eleventh or twelfth day. A feast is arranged for all close relatives and community people. *Barshi* (annual shradh) is done after a year on the day of the death. *Sola Shradh* is observed after three years of death.

Traditionally they were caravan traders and wandering merchants of Gujarat. They do not possess any land. Most of them are engaged in agricultural labour or work in mills and are otherwise engaged in petty work. They have given up their traditional business in the last ten to fifteen years. Females also earn as wage labour, but their wages are less than half to that of the males.

There is a separate community council for each locality of the Depalas. *Jati Pradhan* is selected to solve their problems. He undertakes developmental measures like education and social welfare.

Every *atak* has a *kul devi* and every *kul devi* has a *Bhuva*, who performs rites and ceremonies. They have different religious sects, viz. Shiv Panthi, Rama panthi, Swami Narayan Panthi. They observe Shivratri, Holi, Uthasini, Janamastami, Sankranti and other Hindu festivals during the year. Every year they go for *padayatra* to different pilgrim centres. In Gujarat, those who have taken the membership of *Swadhyay*, do not observe discrimination.

Females of this community do the *bharat ka kam*, (embroidery) during their leisure. They sing songs during marriage and other festivals and perform the *jarki* dance. At the time of *Navratri* they dance *jarki*.

Depala maintain commensal relations with other service castes. They share well and temples with other castes. They participate in village panchayat and other political associations.

The literacy level among the Depala is very low and females are mostly illiterate. Their children go to primary school. Very few males have completed graduation. They make use of modern medical facilities. Females go for sterilization. They avail of the facilities electricity. The families in the villages have received Integrated Child Development programme's facilities and children avail of mid-day meal in their schools. Public Distribution system and banking facilities are used by them.

Aditi Mukherjee

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DHANKA

The Dhanka are a subgroups of the Bhils at the regional level. It is recalled in their oral tradition that they have migrated from other regions. They are distributed in the talukas of Dabhol, Sankheda, Nasvadi, Tilakvada, Jambu-Ghoda, Chhota-Udeur of Baroda district, Rajpipla area of Broach district and also Nizar and Uchhal talukas of Surat district. According to the 1981 census, their population along with Tadvi, and Tetaria and Valva, is 185,091. They speak among themselves in Gujarati and use Gujarati script. They belong to the category of scheduled tribes.

The Dhanka are non-vegetarian in food habits. A section among them, the Bhagats are vegetarian. Wheat and *jawar* are the common cereals which they consume with pulses and vegetables. Sometimes they take rice. The groundnut oil and sesamum are the most preferred cooking media. They consume alcoholic drinks. The ceremonial dishes are *Siso* (made up of wheat), *Debra* (made up of *jowar*) and *kheer* (prepared out of milk).

The Dhanka community is divided into three subgroups. Tadvi, Valva and Tetaria. Earlier there was no inter-marriages or inter-dinning between these subgroups, however such restrictions are no longer followed. These subgroups are equal in status. The Dhankas have various exogamous *ataks* (clan) like Parmer, Chaora, Chowhan etc. Only a few *ataks* are associated with a *kuladev* (clan god) or *kuldevi* (clan goddess). A full name of an individual indicates his own name, his father's name and the name of the community. The community recognizes their status as *adivasi* and others also recognize them as such.

The Dhanka strictly follow endogamy at community level. Junior sororate and junior levirate marriages are permitted. The widow remarriage (*natra*) and the remarriage after divorce also take place. Generally women marry around 18 years of age, while the men do so when they are 21 years old. Marriages are negotiated but in some cases the adult male members choose their own mates. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. *Bangir* (bangles) are

the symbol of married women. Bride price both in cash and kind is paid. They follow the rule of patrilocal residence after marriage. Divorce is permissible, common reasons for this being infertility, extra-marital relationships and maladjustment. Divorce compensation is given to the wife. Children are the liability of the mother in such cases. The widow and divorcee remarriages are permitted by society, with brief marriage rituals.

Nuclear type of families predominate over joint families. Avoidance relations exist between *bahu* (daughter-in-law) and *sasur* (father-in-law). Joking relations are permitted between husband and his *sali* (wife's younger sister) and with the elder brother's wife and her husband's younger brothers. Male equigeniture is the rule of inheritance. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family.

The women do not get a share of their parental property. They have a great role in the family management such as collecting fuel, bringing potable water and sometimes they take part in agricultural operations. The women have a major role in socio-religious sphere but they hardly have any role in the mechanism of social control. They have a low status.

Sreemanth ritual is observed in the seventh month of pregnancy and it is performed at the husband's home. The first delivery takes place in the natal home. Deliveries take place in hospitals or health centres. After delivery the mother is confined to a separate room for thirty-seven days. The father's sister (*fui*) gives the name to the new born. *Mundan* (shaving of head hair) is observed when a vow to that affect has been taken. Marriage rituals are performed at the bride's residence. The Brahman priest (*Pujari*) officiates at these rituals. The bride and bride-groom perform five clockwise circumambulations (*feras*) around the sacred fire (*chorie*). After the completion of marriage rituals a feast is given to the groom's relatives and the assembled by the bride's father.

The dead in general are cremated, but the children below three years of age are buried. Women are not permitted to be present at cremations. The dead body is carried five times clockwise around the pyre before it is actually placed on it. The eldest son lights the pyre. After ten days of death the *dasma* is performed. The *egarma* is performed on the eleventh day when the *shradh* ceremony and

pinddan rituals are also performed. The brahman officiates at all these rituals. The *barma* is performed on the twelfth day.

The Dhankas are mainly agriculturists. Land is their main economic resource while collection of forest products supplement their income. Some earn their livelihood as daily wage labourers. Very few people among them are engaged in the services. Children below fifteen years support their parents in agricultural activities. Inter-dependence like *charkha rakhna* system reported among them. In this system the agricultural labourers are kept on a contract basis for a month or a year or even for three years.

They have their own traditional caste council, the headman of which is called *Daia* who is selected by a voice-vote. The *Police Patel*, who gets his remuneration from the government, maintains law the order and also settles the disputes in the presence of *Daia* (head man of the community). If the Police Patel fails in these matters, then the local police station is contacted for the same.

They are Hindus. The *atak* (clan) are associated with *kuldev* (clan god) and *kuldevi* (clan goddess). The *kuldevis* are *Mahakali*, *Khoriarmata* etc. and one of their *kuldev* is *Gopchowhan*. The head of the family worship their respective *kuldev* and *kuldevi* in their households. At the time of vow, they inform the sacred specialist (*Bhua*). Besides the *kuldevs* and *kuldevis*, they also believe in the gods and goddesses like *Baucharmata*, *Ambamata*, *Khodiarmata*, *Kali* etc. They celebrate festivals like *Navratri*, *Divasa Diwali*, *Holi*, *Dussara* and *Ujanl*. These festivals are celebrated with dance and song.

The community has a rich oral tradition of songs, folklore, folk tales etc.

The Dhankas accept water and food from *Rathwa* community but *Rathwa* do not reciprocate. They accept and exchange water and food with the *Bhilalas*, and *Vasabas*. The Brahmins and Banias do not take water and food from the Dhanka but the Dhanka accept from them. They have an easy access to the sharing of wells and other water sources.

Literacy levels are very low mainly because children are actually engaged in subsistence activities from a very young age. Boys study upto the secondary level and the girls upto the primary level. Favourable attitude is reported in case of allopathic medicines and medicare and they are aware of the family planning

programmes. Electricity has reached their locality and some members are using it. They use firewood and kerosene oil as fuels, chemical fertilizer in their agricultural operations. Their children benefit by mid-day meal scheme in their school and they have also benefitted by fair price ration shops. Their attitude towards savings is not favourable.

S.K. Nandy

DHED-BAWA/DHED

Dhed is the term used for a low caste and Bawa means the saint who begs alms from house to house. They are a community of mendicants from those castes who are considered lower. According to 1981 census their population in Gujarat is 12823. Their spoken language is Gujarati, the script used by them is also Gujarati. They wear clothes of *bhagva* (ochre) colour, a *rudraksha mala* or *tulsi mala* in the neck, copper or silver or golden ring in their ear, *bhagva*-coloured *pagdi* (headgear) and *tilak* of *gopichandan* by which they can be identified. They belong to the category of scheduled castes. They are distributed in all the six districts of Saurashtra.

The Dhed Bawa are non-vegetarians; eating mutton, beef, fish, eggs etc. Their staple food is *bajra*, *jowar*, millet, *gehu* (wheat) along with all types of pulses and seasonal vegetables. Occasionally they take liquor which they purchase from the Miana-Muslim community. They consume alcohol especially at the time of Narasingh devta puja. They are in the habit of smoking for the last ten years.

The Dhed Bawa have different clans viz. Rathod, Mackwana, Parmar, Chavda etc and there is no hierarchy. They belong to the Sudra Varna. Each clan has its separate *Bhua* (worshipper) each clan goddess is worshipped at Navratri. Other communities such as Brahman, Bania, Dangashia etc regard them as a scheduled caste.

Marriages by negotiation is the usual practice and community endogamy is the rule. Age of marriage for girls is 18 years and for boys 21 years. A pair of ivory bangles, vermillion on the parting of the hair and wearing an anklet are the symbols of married women. Wearing of *mangalsutra* is a recent trend among them. The practice of paying bride price is prevalent. *Fagun* (February-March) and *Baisakh* (March-April) and Ganesh Chatruthi are auspicious days for marriage ceremonies. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Re-marriage is permissible both for males and females. Re-marriage

or *punar lagan*, or *ghar-gharena*, is performed in simple rituals. In case of divorce, the party which initiates has to pay compensation to the aggrieved alongwith the gifts given at the time of marriage. All types of consanguineous marriages, junior levirate and junior sororate are permissible and practised.

Extended families are the main type but there are nuclear families also. Within the family joking relations exist between a woman and her *devar* (husband's younger brother); similarly between a man and the younger sister of his wife. A daughter-in-law has avoidance relations with her elders. She walks barefoot and generally maintains a low profile. The property is equally divided among the sons with daughters having no claim whatsoever. Sometimes, a younger son gets the larger share because he has to maintain his un-married sisters and parents in old age. Succession is in the male line.

The status of women in their society is low. They manufacture *moti-ka-khillona* and articles of embroidery which are sold. The females also participate in other economic activities. They contribute to the family income. Males are the decision makers. But there are Mahila Mandal (associations) also known as "Sakhi mandal" with an exclusive membership of women to be found in various villages. These are in the nature of savings associations meant to help women in emergencies.

During pregnancy the ceremony of *Khola Bhara* takes place in the seventh month in the residence of her husband. Her mother comes with new clothes, rice and a coconut. The sister of her husband places the rice and coconut in the lap of the pregnant woman and applies vermillion on her forehead. The woman is taken to her maternal home for delivery which takes place with the assistance of a mid-wife, but presently expectant mothers are being sent to hospitals. Birth pollution is observed for forty days. *Chatti* is a ceremony performed on the sixth day after birth in which the child is given its name by its father's sister. The clan-deity is worshipped on that day. After a year *bal-murawa* (tonsure) ceremony takes place.

Offers for marriage comes from the prospective groom and priest fixes the date for the marriage. Three days before the marriage, the marriage booth (*mandap*) is erected and women sing folk songs which continues till the end of the ceremony. The priest

instals the idol of Ganapati. The maternal uncle of the bride brings gifts including clothes and this is called *mosalu*. *Phera* i.e. circumambulation of the fire is performed by the couple after which the bride and the bridegroom eat together and then depart to the bride-groom's house.

They bury their dead, the body being carried on a bamboo cot or bier to which four coconuts are tied on the four sides. The body is covered by new clothes. Before lowering the body in to the grave the eldest son put fire to the first toe of the right leg. After that they cover the grave with salt and, soil. Mourning is observed for a period of twelve days and this is known as *uttari-kriya*. This *shradh* ceremony or *uttari-kriya*, is never performed on Tuesday or Sunday. On the *barmi*, (twelfth day) the *Valand* (barber) perform tonsure on all the male members of the family. They observe *tarimasi* on third month, *chaumasi* on forth month and *barsi* after the completion of an year.

Their primary and traditional economic activity was begging drassed as a *sadhu* or holy man. Since this practice is now considerably on the decline they have shifted to other fields. Both males and females are engaged as labour in farms, ceramic industry, factories or even in construction work. They are mainly landless. Child laour is not common among them. The women never sit quietly and females are more laborious and energetic than males.

They have a council of elders at the community level having one *Pradhan*, (chief) and *Upa-Pradhan*, (vice president) and four to five other members. This caste council looks after the welfare of its members and settles the disputes about land, property, marriage, bride-price, divorce re-marriage etc. Besides if one of their *sadhu*, dies then this council takes full charge of his funeral rites. If imposes cash fines, on the offenders. The caste councils meet annually to take measures regarding the welfare of their community.

The Dheds are Hindus belonging to the *Vishnupanthi* and *Ramapanthi* sects. They observe Navratri and worship different goddesses like *Khodiar Mata*, *Chamunda Mata* as their clan goddesses. They also worship Hanumanji, Narsingh devta, Shankerji and observe Gokulastami or Krishnastami, Mahashivaratri, Diwali etc. Their religious priest is Garoda

Brahman. But each clan goddesses has a separate *Bhua* (priest) who offers worship and performs the rites for clan goddesses during Navaratri. They visit various pilgrim spots viz Somnath, Dwaraka, Hardwar, Mathura, Brindaban etc. Recently, they have become followers of the Swadhyaya Sangh of Panduranga Shastry. This religious sect has introduced great socio-religious changes in their society.

The Dhed-Bawa women do excellent embroidery work on the shawls besides making toys of beads. Males manufacture the *ramsagar* or *tambura*, a string musical instrument which they play while begging.

Traditionally they maintain inter-community linkages with those caste groups which are placed low in the local hierarchy. Those who are holy men among them are regarded by the lower castes as their *guru* (preceptor) and are offered money, good food etc. In the olden time, they were never permitted to enter the temple. Their cremation ground is also separate from that of others including that of the Harijans. But now in the last two or three years, changes have occurred because of Swadhyaya Sangh and they now draw water with other lower castes from the same well. Some of the Harijan communities like Chamar, Hadi, Nalia, Chamodia, Bhangi have started maintaining relations with them.

Their children get the facilities of education at the primary level. Their literacy rate is very low. They get medical facilities from panchayat office and they are always advised by the family welfare staff to check the increase in their numbers through adoption of birth control measures. They avail of electricity, post office, mid-day meal through ICDS facilities in the school though they live in the village.

Aditi Mukherjee

DHOBI (MUSLIM)

The Dhobi community has been derived from the Hindi word *dhona* meaning to wash. Therefore the person who do *dhulai ka kam* (washing of clothes) are known as Dhobi. They claim their migration from Rajasthan and settled in various part of the state. They are having a wide distribution in various districts of Gujarat and mainly concentrated in urban areas. The Dhobis speak Gujarati among themselves and also with others. Gujarati script is used. Some of them are also conversant in Hindi.

The Dhobis are non-vegetarian in respect of their food habits, consuming fish, meat, egg, chicken, beef and buffaloe meat, but they abstain from pork. They use cereals like-rice, wheat, maize and *bajra*, pulses like *moong*, *masur* and *urad*. Mustard and groundnut oil are used as cooking media. Alcoholic drinks are prohibited. They drink milk, and tea. Some of them are habituated to smoke *bidis* and cigarettes and chew betel leaves. Special food is prepared on festive occasions.

The Dhobi regard themselves as an intermediate caste in Muslim society and rank with the Sheikh. But other Muslim communities Memon, Babars regard them as an impure caste and consider them low.

The Dhobi practises endogamy at the community level and marriages are performed according to the Muslim customs. First cousin marriage are permissible. Boys and girls are married between the age of 15 to 20 years and 20 to 25 years respectively. Marriage alliances are negotiated by parents on both sides. Monogamy is the common form of marriage, though polygamy is permitted. *Mehar* is promised by the groom during the marriage ceremony. Dowry is paid both in cash and kind. They follow patrilocal rule of residence after marriage. Divorce or *talaq* is allowed. In such cases the *mehar* is paid to the wife alongwith maintenance for the *iddat* period. Remarriage is permitted to a widower, and divorces. They do not practice widow remarriage.

The most common are the joint families. The women observe

purdha (veil) in the presence of males. Joking relations are permitted between a man and the younger sister of his wife, between a woman and her husband's younger brother and between grand parents and grand children. The maximum share (14 out of sixteen anas) of their ancestral property is distributed among the sons equally and rest (two out of sixteen ana) of the share goes to the daughters. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family after his father's death.

The status of woman is low in comparison to that of man. They do all household work, child care and participate in all social, ritual and religious activities. Their women go to the river bed (*nadi- kinare*) for washing clothes. They do all house hold work, and contribute equally to the family income but their decision regarding family management does not get any weightage.

Pre-delivery ceremony *god varana* is performed in the seventh month of pregnancy. New clothes and some special food according to her choice are given to her. Predelivery restriction i.e. going to grave yard, picking up heavy articles, to go out alone in the evening are imposed. Name giving ceremony is performed on the sixth day after birth. Birth pollution is observed for a period of one and a half month. *Chilli* or *Bari Nikalna* is the ceremony observed to mark end of pollution. *Aqiqa* is performed after one and-a-half month, when one goat is sacrificed for a female child and two goats for a male. *Bismilla* is the ceremony observe after four years specially when the baby is able to speak. *Khatna* (circumcision) is done for the male child at the age of 5 to 9 years which is celebrated with a community feast.

Nikah (marriage) is performed through a number of ceremonies which starts with *mangni* or (betrothal). The *nikah* is held at bride's place. The consent is obtained from both bride and groom and it is registered by the *Qaji* in the presence of two witnesses. Marriage feast or *dawatewalima* is arranged by the bride's parent. On the second day after marriage, the groom with the bride returns to the groom's residence. *Suhagrat* (Consummation of marriage) is held at groom's place.

The Muslim Dhobi bury their dead. The corpse is buried after the *Maulvi* reads a prayer. The body is laid in the grave with the head towards the west. *Jiyarat* is observed after three days. The members of the *jamat* recite the holy *Koran*. *Chilisma* or *chehallanm*

is observed on the fortieth day after death. A funeral feast is arranged which marks the end of the pollution. All these ceremonies are performed according to Islamic tenets. It is now reported that rituals are being curtailed on such occasions due to economic reasons.

The Dhobis are a landless community. Traditional occupation of the community is the washing and cleaning of clothes. Those Dhobies who enjoy a better economic position operate laundries. The actual washing is being done by poorer section. Their grown up children and women help equally in this occupation. They are in the low income group, now due to scarcity of water, their condition is quite pathetic.

The Dhobi also have their own caste council called *Dhobi Muslim Jamat*. It is a local organization consisting of the members from two or three neighboring Dhobi mohallas. The chief of the *jamat* is called President, who is elected by a voice vote. The President along with eight other members of the *jamat* settles the disputes. If any person disobeys the decision of the Jamat, he or she can be punished. The Municipality mainly is meant for planning and implementation of government welfare programmes.

The community belongs to the Sunni-sect of Islam. They believe in *Pirs* (the religious *gurus*). The *Qaji* perform death rituals and religious ceremonies. They observe festivals like. *Id-Milad-Un-Nabi*, *Idul fitr*, *Id-ul-zoha* and *Muharram* etc. Their main sacred centres are *Ajmar*, *Mecca* and *Madeina* which they aspire to visit.

They exchange food with other Muslim communities. They participate in each others social, ritual and religious functions. Inter-community marriage is not permitted. They share water resources, roads, schools, public functions with the other communities. Employer and employee relationships exist among them. They share burial ground with other Muslim communities. The community has a good linkage with urban communities because of their occupation.

Their boys study upto college level and drop out due to economic reasons. Their girls study from primary to matriculate level but they also drop out due to social reasons. Their attitude is favourable towards modern medicare. They do not favour the family planning programmes. They have drinking water facilities in their vicinity. Their area is well connected by bus and rail

services with other major towns and cities. They use coal, fire wood, kerosene and cooking gas as fuel. They avail of the public distribution system. Only a few are utilizing banking facilities and having a positive attitude towards saving and investment.

D.P. Biswas

DHODIA

The term Dhodia has been derived from 'Dhulia', a place in Maharashtra from where two Rajput princes namely Dhan Singh and Roop Singh came to this area. They met two beautiful Naika women and got married to them. And thus, a new community was formed and the progeny of these are called 'Dhodia'. Another legend traces their origin from the word Dholaka Dhandhuka, a place near the south bank of Narmada river where Dhana and Roopa married the Naika women named Sani and Jheeni. It is also said that they belonged to Jadav Rajputs, the descendants of Lord Krishna. Due to disturbance at Dwaraka, they came to south Gujarat and settled. They had come with cattle (*dhor*), so they were being called Dhorwala in the beginning. Later on, the term 'Dhodia' was derived from it. This legend narrates that Dhana and Roopa migrated to their present habitat with thousands of community people. The Dhodia are mainly distributed in Surat and Valsad districts of Gujarat. The Dhodia are also distributed in Bharuch, Vadodara, Ahmedabad, and Dangs districts. They are a scheduled tribe. The population of this community is 3,58,773 according to 1971 census. They speak in Dhodia dialect, among themselves. They know Gujarati and use the Gujarati script for writing. The main distinguishing feature to differentiate Dhodia woman from others is the style of their draping the *charaka*.

The Dhodia are non-vegetarians. Staple food for them is rice, wheat and *jowar*. Rice makes main part of their diet. Pulses of *tur*, *urad*, *moong*, *wal* and gram make the part of their diet. Intake of vegetables has increased in their dietary habits and they eat the available seasonal fruits. They take milk and milk products tea daily. Oil of ground nut is used for preparation of food items. Their men take alcoholic drinks purchasing from market. They smoke *bidi* and loose tobacco. Cigarette is smoked by educated and well to do persons. Lapsi is a sweet preparation which is cooked occasionally on festive occasions.

The Dhodia community has a number of exogamous clans which

are equal in status. This also shows their descent and most of the clans are named after some communities with whom the Jadav Rajputs believed to have made contact after settling down in their present habitat. Some of the common clans (*jut*) are Desari Naika, Garasia, Mehta, Joshi, Rawat, Ahir, Vajaria, Rupasari, Gaikwad, Sadu Bamaniya, Pradhaniya, Kedariya, etc. These clans are also locally known as *kud*. Each clan has its headman who propitiates the clan deity. The Dhodia enjoy good social status in the local social hierarchy. They are placed after Brahman, Vania, Rajput, Kanbi, Ahir, etc. They are placed above the tribes like Gamit, Dubla, Naika, Kokna, Chudhary, Kotwalla, Warli and Kolcha.

The Dhodia are monogamous. Polygyny is practised in case of barrenness or insanity of the woman. The rich Dhodia men also go for more than one wife. Age at marriage for the girls is from 16-20 years and for boys, it is from 18-25 years. Negotiated form of marriage is the common norm. Marriage by service is also practised. The symbols of marriage are vermilion (*kanku*) in the middle of the forehead. Bride-price is given in cash and kind. Rule of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce and remarriages are permitted in the community. The person who desires to seek divorce, pays a cash compensation to the other but requires social approval before the divorce is granted. In divorce cases, the children become the liability of the father. Widow-remarriage is allowed in the community. If the younger brother of the deceased is suitable to the widow, she remains in the family as his wife.

Extended and nuclear families are common among the Dhodia community. Avoidance and joking relationships exist in the community. Daughter-in-law keeps veil in front of her father-in-law and husband's elder brother. Joking relationship is maintained between husband's younger brother and elder brother's wife, elder sister's husband and wife's younger sisters. Property is inherited in the male line only and it is equally divided among the sons. If there are no sons, property is given to the daughters. The eldest son succeeds the father. Inter-family linkages are found. They co-operate with each other, on socio-economic and politico—religious matters.

The women work in the family farm. They bring potable water. They are in services too. There are teachers, nurses, doctors and

clerks. Thus, they contribute to family income and actively take part in the family management. They do the household work and look after the children. They are not allowed to participate in the panchayat meetings. Women take part in social and religious activities. They have no right to inherit property.

Pre-delivery ritual *khola Bharana* is celebrated in the seventh month of the first pregnancy and she is presented with clothes and other things by her brother. A pregnant woman does not stitch torn cloth. First delivery takes place in her parent's house. During child birth, they take the help of *dayan* (local midwife). The midwives are from their own community or from Gamit or Duble. *Chhatti* is celebrated on the fourth day and fifth day for the female and male child respectively. The mother takes bath and the house is cleaned on this day. Naming of the child is done by the *fui* (child's father's sister). After this, well worship (*kuwa-Poojan*) is done on the following day. Pollution is observed for thirty-five to forty days after child birth and the mother abstains from hard labour work during this period. *Mundan* (tonsure) ceremony is performed for both the boys and the girls. This is done by a widower or a *Valand* (barber).

In marriage the boy's party goes to see the girl after getting proper information. The girl comes with a glass of water and the boy drops a coin in it. The boy and the girl are allowed to go to movies and are provided chances to meet. If they agree, the girl's party goes to the boy's house with a set of clothes and garland. The boy's party reciprocates. It is known as *chhota chandla*. Date for marriage is fixed. Marriage rituals are performed at bride's residence. A Brahman priest is called to officiate at marriage. The bride and the bride groom exchange garlands. They make *mangalphera* (circumambulation) of the sacred fire for four times. *Kanyadan* is performed and the bride goes with the bride groom. Consummation of marriage takes place in the house of the groom's parents.

They cremate their dead and the children who die below one year of age are buried. Pollution is observed for a day. Pollution is observed for twelve days. The bones are disposed off in Tapi (at Surat) or Gadavari (at Nasik) river. They take purificatory bath on eleventh day. *Barwa* is performed on the twelfth day. House is cleaned and a feast is arranged for the assembled relatives and

kin. *Parjan* is the ancestor worship done collectively by the lineage members in an interval of three to four years. A widow does not wear blouse during the pollution period. After the celebration of *barwa*, she is given new clothes to wear and she can then be remarried.

The *Dhodia* are traditionally and primarily agriculturists. Land is the major economic resources for them. They also do fishing in the rainy season. They are also employed as labourers in the farms roads, and forests. The *Dhodia* have also gone to Gulf countries to earn money. Both men and women are also in white collar jobs. The *Dhodia* cultivate their land by their own. Sometimes they engage labourers to complete various agricultural operations in time. They have irrigation wells. They take double crops also. Some are in petty trade also.

Every *jut* (clan) has a leader who is known as *Agewan*. This is a functional unit for social control and enforcement of rules and regulations in the community. He is supported and helped by other senior members of the community to settle the disputes. The bigger organisation than *jut* is *chaura*. Each *chaura* consists of villages numbering from five to twenty. They also have *Samasta Dhodia Samaj*, a registered body at the community level. It looks after the welfare of the group and initiate reforms. The statutory village panchayat plans and executes the programmes for the welfare work.

The *Dhodia* are Hindu by religion. They worship Mahadeo, Hanuman, Amba Mata, Kalka, Balia, Bagh Devi, Goal Devi etc. *Kameshari Devi* is their home deity and it is the deity of grains. *Kak Balia* protects them from small-pox. They worship *Goal Devi* for the welfare of the cattle and propitiate *Nagdev* for saving them from snake bite. The *Dhodias* approach the *Bhagats* and *Bhuwas* and take treatment from them to get rid off the effects of violent spirits. The *Bhagats* also give herbal medicine. The *Dhodias* are the devotees of Jalaram Bapa. They worship him on the seventh day of the dark half of the month of Kartik (November). The *Dhodia* go to Nasik, Shirdi Ke Sai Baba, Dwaraka, Dakot, Unai, Veerpur, etc. for pilgrimage. The *Dhodia* celebrate festivals like Holi, Ganesh Chaturthi, Rakhi, Dashahara, Diwali, Diwaso, etc.

They have oral traditions. They sing folk songs. They play with *tur* (precision instrument) and drum during Holi festival.

The Dhodia have got inter-community linkages with the neighbouring tribes businessmen barber and the Brahman priest. They accept food and water from higher castes and other groups who abstain from eating carcasses of dead animals. They share the wells for drinking water, but have separate crematorium. There are contractors and businessmen among them. Political awareness and leadership is found in the Dhodia community. There are M.L.A. and M.P.S. from Dhodia community. Cultivator-labour and employer-worker relationship exist among them.

The Dhodia send their children to schools and provide them education. The girls generally discontinue after higher secondary level for marriage. They go to the hospitals and dispensaries for health and medical care. They also take the help of local medicinemen. Family welfare programme is effective among them. They also adopt other measures of birth control. They get drinking water from wells and handpumps. They get loans from the banks for digging of wells, to purchase pumps, bullock-cart, chemical fertilizers etc. They avail of the facilities of media and communication. Their houses are electrified. The Dhodia use fire wood, cow dung cakes, kerosene, coal etc. as fuels. They make use of chemical fertilizers. They get the facilities of public distribution system (ration). The children are provided mid-day meals in the schools.

L.N. Soni

DHULDHOYA

The Dhuldhoya community claim their origin from the Sheikh category of the Muslim, migrated from Mawasa of Kota district in Rajasthan about fifty years ago to different places in Gujarat in search of livelihood. They call themselves and are also regarded by the local people as *Dhuldhoya* being their traditional occupation was *dhul-dhone ka kaam* or straining dust and separating gold particles. They are mainly distributed in Sabarkanta and Vadodara districts. The Dhuldhoya speak in Gujarati and use Gujarati script.

The community is non-vegetarian, eating fish, egg and mutton etc. They also consume beef and meat of buffaloe. Their staple food is wheat, maize and rice. They use pulses like *moong*, *masoor*, *urad* and *chana* and seasonal vegetables available in their local markets. Groundnut oil and mustard oil are used for cooking. Consumption of fruits is low. Alcoholic drinks are prohibited. Taking tea is very common. Sweet dishes like *halwa*, *kheer*, *puri* and rice with mutton are prepared as special dishes on several religious and ritual occasions. Some of them have a habit of smoking *bidis* and cigarettes and majority of them chew betel leaf.

Matrimonial alliances are restricted among the community members only. Both parallel—cousin and cross-cousin marriages are permitted. They prefer adult marriage, the age of marriage varying between 18 to 22 years for girls and 20 to 25 years for boys. Marriages are arranged through negotiation. Monogamy is the rule. Polygyny is also permitted. System of *mehar* is prevalent among them. These days gifts (cash and jewelry articles) are given as *dahej* (dowry) to the groom, depending on the financial capacity of the bride's family. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce or *talaq* is permitted. Compensation is given to the wife. Children are the liability of father in such cases. Remarriage is permitted for divorcees and a widower but not for a widow.

Nuclear family is most common among the Dhuldhoya society though a few still maintain extended families. Joking relations

exist between a man and the younger sister of his wife and between a woman and her husband's younger brother and sister. Similarly avoidance relations are maintained between a woman and her husband's elder brother. Conflicts and confrontation also exist within families. Right of inheritance of ancestral property is based on male equigeniture while the eldest son succeeds to the authority.

Women enjoy low status as compared to men. They have no right to inherit ancestral property though they actively participate in economic activities and look after the household. They have a major role in social and ritual ceremonies but never participate in politics. The Dhuldhoya women have no decision making power and have no right of control over the family expenditure.

Delivery takes place both within the house as well as in hospitals. In the period between three and five weeks after birth *aqiqa* is performed, in which one goat for a female child and two goats for a male child are sacrificed and a feast arranged. *Mundan* or tonsure of the new babies is also done on this occasion. *Bismilla* is performed when the boy is able to recite. *Khatna* or *Musalmani* (circumcision) is done in case of male child only by a *hajam* (Muslim barber) or a doctor at the hospital when he is five to nine years old.

Marriage or *nikah* is performed at the bride's house. Marriage ceremony starts with *sagai* (engagement) after negotiations are completed. The *Qaji* seek the consent of both bride and the groom and after getting the same the marriage is announced. Marriage feast is hosted by bride's father. On the next day the newly married couple returns to groom's residence where *suhag raat* or (consummation of marriage) takes place.

The Dhuldhoya bury their dead. The body is bathed and covered by a new cloth (*kaffan*) and is carried to the burial ground by family members and relatives. The grave or *kavar* is prepared and before the body is lowered into it *namaz* or prayers is performed. *Ziyarat* is the first ceremony observed on the third day of death, till that day no food is cooked in the house of the deceased. The *challisma* or *chehllam* ceremony is performed on the fortieth day after death. On this occasion also a feast is held. Members of the community called and fed at the home of the deceased after four and-a-half months.

The Dhuldhoya are a landless community constituting of largely

the labour class. The traditional occupation has been given up largely and they have taken to petty shop keeping, retail trade, centred in their houses. Besides, a section are also engaged in daily wage labour in railway and bus stations and in rickshaw pulling.

The Dhuldhoya are associated with the caste council of other Muslim communities such as Sheikh *jamat* or the Sunni *jamats*. They have their community organization. This organization works like a traditional *jamat* and settles divorce and criminal cases. Statutory panchayat plans and implements developmental programmes.

The Dhuldhoya belong to Sunni sect of Islam. Ajmer serif, Mecca and Medine are their main sacred centres. They believe in Abdul Kadir Jelani (from Ajmer) as their *bada pir*. They strongly believe that if they contribute in the name of *Pir*, they may get relief from disease and problems. They employ *Kaji* for performing their religious and ritual ceremonies. They observe festivals like Muharram Idul fitr, Id-ul-zoha, Sabebarat etc.

Since the Dhuldhoya are settled in urban areas, they have good linkages with Saiyed, Sheikh, Pathan, Mansoori, Ganchi and Sindhi Muslim. They exchange water and food with the above mentioned communities, participating in and helping each other in their social and religious functions. They share burial place and religious centre with the other Muslims but they do not maintain matrimonial relations with other communities. The community shares road, panchayat house, public functions with other groups of people. The community has a good relation with other urban communities. They have no political leaders of their own.

The rate of literacy and education among the Dhuldhoya is low, though attitude towards formal education is favourable. The children drop out because of poor economic conditions. They enjoy medical facilities at the local health centres both private and government. They do not have favourable attitude towards family planning programmes. Kerosene oil and charcoal, are the main fuel resources. Majority of the families avail of the public distribution system. Banking facilities are available but very few of them have a tendency for saving and investment.

D.P. Biswas

DUBLA

Dubla in Hindi means 'thin' or 'weak', even though physically they are stout. They claim to be the descendants of the Rajputs. Actually they remained economically very weak due to their dependency on the landlords whom they served as *hali* for a considerably long time. The Dubla are also known as 'Halpati'. *Hali* means a permanent agricultural labourer who ploughs the field and his family also serves the landlords by working in the house and in the fields. Enthoven (1920) says that "the Dublas or weaklings, as their names is said to mean, are a feeble people, soon aged by their hard life and their fondness for liquor". Sinha (1988) considers that the term 'Dubla' has relevance to their poor economy and hardships in life. Shah (1958) writes that when Parashuram was killing all the Kshatriyas (warriors), the Rathors to save their lives told him that they were the *Talavias* (living on the bank of the tank) thereby saving their lives. Since then, they are known as Talavia Rathors. The Talavia is one of the subdivisions of the Dubla community which is numerically the largest section and an endogamous group. The Dubla are chiefly distributed in Surat, Valsad, Bharuch and Vadodara districts. They speak in Gujarati language and use Gujarati script. They have been listed under the category of scheduled tribes.

Shah (1958) writes that the Dublas are an isolated and foreign element in the population of Gujarat. The isolation is more prominent in case of minimum frontal breadth, auricular height, sitting length and lastly upper facial length. As regards other characteristics, Dublas have lower, if not lowest mean value for stature.

The Dubla are non-vegetarian consuming mutton, fish, chicken and eggs. Rice is staple food for them. Now, they have started taking wheat and jowar also. Pulses of *tur*, *urad* and *wal* are consumed by them. They use almost all vegetables and seasonal fruits which are locally available. They use Pamoline, soyabean and groudnut oil for cooking. They consume alcohol preparing it

from the *mahuah* flowers. They take tea daily. They smoke *bidl*.

They are divided into twenty subdivisions. Talavia, Rathore, Vohariya, Damaria, Valsadia, Olpadia, Mandavia, UMBERIA, Ghanghodia, Khodia, Choria, Ukharia, Baramia, Baria, Narda, Haevia, Thakura, Karcha, Watal, Parsi Dubla and Laldatwala Dubla (who colour their teeth red during marriage). The Talavia Rathore consider themselves to be superior, claiming Rajput descent. Enthoven (1920) says that "the Barias are named after their practice of performing funeral rites on the twelfth day after death, Madavis after performing funeral rites under a shade (*mandara - bough*) and the Talavias after their practice of performing the funeral rites on the bank of a pond or tank etc.

The Dubla are monogamous. Age at marriage for the girls is from 16 to 20 years and for boys, it is 20 to 25 years. Marriages are negotiated. The symbols of marriage for a woman are *kaliganthi* (black necklace), *kanku* (red powder) in the hair parting and *chandio* (tikki) on the forehead. Bride-price is prevalent. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal but in the *Gharajamai* system, the man lives in his wife's house permanently. Divorce and remarriages are permitted in the community. In the case of divorce children become the liability of the mother. If the woman leaves her husband, compensation has to be paid. Cases of divorce occur due to adultery, infertility of the wife etc. Widow remarriage is also permitted. Junior levirate and junior sororate are allowed.

Nuclear and vertically extended families co-exist. Avoidance is observed between wife and her husband's elder brother and other male relatives of the same order. Son-in-Law also observes avoidance relation to same extent with his mother-in-Law and other relatives of his wife's family. Joking relationship exists between a woman and the younger brother of her husband and between a man and his wife's younger sister. Rules of property inheritance follow male equigeniture. The house goes to the youngest son. The eldest son succeeds the authority. Women do not inherit parental property. If there is no male issue, then the youngest daughter inherits the house. Other part of property is equally divided among the daughters.

Women work in the fields and outside too as day-labourers. They collect fuel and fodder from the nearby forest areas and help in performing certain rituals and religious activities. They manage

family affairs well. Their role is very important in maintaining the house-hold, nursing of the children, cooking of food etc. she enjoy a status equal to their men.

In the seventh month of pregnancy *khora bharana* is celebrated. Her brother arrives with a set of clothes and gifts for her. She remains at her parent's house for the first delivery. During child birth, help of a *dayan* (midwife) is taken. Purificatory bath is performed on the fifth day and *chhati* is done on the sixth day. The child is put in a swing on this day. Child's father's sister gives the name to the child. Pollution is observed for forty days. *Kuwa-poojan* (well worship) is performed on the eleventh day. After performing a ritual worship, the mother fetches water from the well preferably on a Tuesday. On the day of *Annaprasan*, *sira* is fed to the child and *prasad* is distributed among the children. *Mundan* ceremony is performed within a year or two for the first son.

The boys and the girls of the community know each other as they work together as labourers and in many cases, they get involved in pre-marital sex resulting in pregnancy. The relation is regularised by marriage. Once the negotiation is finalized *chandla* (engagement) is performed in which the groom's family presents a set of cloth, *kaliganthi* (black necklace), coconut and the bride-price. Marriage season starts after the Holi festival and continues upto *Nagpanchmi*. *Peethi* (oil turmeric paste) is anointed on the boy and the girl for three to five days before marriage. Marriage takes place at the girl's house. The girl is brought to the *mandap* (marriage booth). She is given *kaliganthi* and red glass bangles to wear. Vermilion is applied on parting of her hair. *Reet* (rituals) is performed for the boy and it is known as *mandap ki reet*. It is done by the womenfolk of the house. The *shlokas* (saptapadi verses) are recited by the Brahman priest. This is followed by *hast-milap*. A feast is arranged. Next day she goes to her husband's house. Consummation of marriage takes place at groom's house. In between betrothal or *nani tadi* and marriage or *moti tadi* the girl goes to her husband's house and remains there for a month or two to observe whether she can live there amicably. During this stay, she is not allowed to sleep with her husband.

They bury their dead and observe the pollution for twelve days. Cremation is also now practised. The corpse is washed and covered with a new cloth and taken to the bank of a tank or river for

cremation or burial. In the evening *patra forwanu* is held. An earthen lamp is lighted. Four persons make four rounds of the lamp with mango leaves. After this it is thrown at the place of *bishama* (half-way stop). Tonsure is performed on the third or fifth day. *Barma* is performed on the twelfth day. They go to Nasik (Godavari river) or Valsad (Teethal-Dariya) for consignment of the bones to the water.

Land are the main economic resource of the Dubla. They are marginal cultivators and landless agricultural labourers. They possess buffaloes, cows and goats and are associated with the *doodh Mandli* (milk societies). The Dubla do fishing in the rainy season. They also do the tailoring work and shopkeeping. They are in government services too. The Dubla have learnt the work of diamond-cutting and polishing. They are doing this work at Bardoli, Surat and Navsari.

The Dubla have a traditional community panchayat (*nate panch*) which is headed by the *faliya Patel* (*Mukhi* or *Agewan*). The regional panchayat is known as *Samast Halpati Samaj* (south Gujarat). It is headed by a *Pramukh*. Other officials are *Mantri* (Secretary), *Mukhis* (village heads) and committee *sabyas* (members). The *Nate Panch* not only settles the disputes of intra-community nature but has initiated reforms as well to try protect the community's interests. Statutory village panchayat looks after development programmes in the village. *Bar gam chaura* is another organisation which takes care of the inter— and intra-tribal disputes. *Halpati Sangathan*. *Khet Mazdoor Sahakari Maneli*, *Halpati Shikshan Prachar Samitti*, etc are also working for the welfare of the Dubla.

The Dubla are Hindu by religion, *Bamaniya Bhoot* is the biggest among the malevolent spirits and it is believed to live in the cremation ground. *Marki Mata* is also offered with animal sacrifice. They pay much regards to *Kanseri Devi* (*Anna-Mata*), *Hirwa Dev* and *Bhangwen Bapji*. *Kanseri Devi* is worshipped on the day of *Holi* and *Diwali*. *Aspher Dev* is the village deity whose abode is in the *Peepal* tree. The *Bhagat* or *Bhuva* is responsible for all the magico-religious practices. Ancestor worship is done on the day after marriage. The Dubla celebrate festivals like *Diwasa*, *Holi*, *Diwali*, *Dashahara*, *Shivratri*, *Rakshabandan*, *Navratri*, *Ganesh Chaturthi*, *Matavi-atam* (*Ashwin* or *October*) and *Makar Sankranti*. If there is no rain or if delayed, then Dubla unmarried adolescent

girls carry earthen pitchers full of water and move around the village. They sing some folk songs to appease Varun Deo, the god of rain. They visit Ambika Mata Temple, Mahadeoji, Unai Mata, and Mahadeoji on different occasions.

They have oral tradition supported by dance and music. *Harshai dholak* and *nagada* are the musical instruments used by them in marriage and festivals.

They interact with a number of non-tribal groups on various occasions. The Barber, *Prajapati* (potter) Mahar serve them. They accept food and water from various groups except the scheduled castes. With the introduction of inviting Brahman priests in marriage for the recitation of the *saptapadi* verse they now have developed linkages with them. They participate in the local politics and have their representatives in the state Assembly. Landlord-tenant and cultivator—labour relationship exist, A socio-religious movement among the Dubla in the form of Sanatan Dharma was initiated by Soma Bhai C. Patel in 1962. His followers have given up drinking of liquor, eating of meat and have abandoned animal sacrifice to the deities.

The Dubla are now sending their children to schools and providing them education to get into government services. Girls discontinue after primary education and are involved in domestic work. For health and medical care, they go to the hospitals. Family welfare programme is very much effective among them. They have wells, hand pumps and taps for drinking water. They have received loans for the purchase of cows and buffaloes. Buses ply upto their village. They use wood, coal, cow-dung cakes and kerosene as fuel. Mid-day meals are provided to the children. They avail of the facility of the public distribution system.

L.N. Soni

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DUDHWALA (MUSLIM)

The Dudhwala is named after their occupation of milk selling. They claim their origin from Shaikh Muslims. Gazetteer of Vadodara District (1979) states that the Dudhwalas are mainly found in Vadodara city their main occupation being selling milk. Gujarati is their mother tongue and Gujarati script is used.

The Dudhwala community is non-vegetarian. Mutton, beef and chicken are consumed along with eggs. Rice and wheat are the main cereals. Pulses like *moong*, *masoor* are taken. Groundnut oil is used as cooking medium. Potato, onion, brinjal, *methi*, (fenugreek leaves), tomato and ladies finger are the common vegetables and all the available roots and tubers in the market are eaten. Consumption of seasonal fruits is moderate. Milk, tea and curd are widely consumed. Home made sweets like *shera* or *kheer* prepared out of milk, wheat and sugar are eaten during festive occasions. There has been increasing trend towards vegetarianism in recent years.

The community has surnames. Hakim or Shaikh, Buildingwala, Bhindawala, Makadawala, Koliwala, Tamachawala etc. are some of the common surnames. They admit that they are placed after Brahman, Ghanchi, Modi and Patel, at par with Muslim communities and above scheduled castes in the local social hierarchy.

Both parallel-and cross-cousins are preferred in mate selection. Girls and boys are married off in the age range of 18-22 years and 21-25 years respectively. Monogamy is the usual form of marriage practised since consent of the *Jamath* is to be obtained in case of polygyny. A widow is not expected to wear glass bangles and dark colored clothes. The family of the groom gives ornaments to the bride which are to be returned in case of divorce. A fixed sum of Rs. 127.50 or Rs. 1,001/- is instantly paid towards *mehar* before *nikah*. Patrilocal residence is the rule after marriage. Divorce is permitted though *Jamat* tries to prevent it. Widow remarriage is allowed. A widow with children prefer not to remarry for the

sake of her children. An option to give a feast after *nikah* and the instant payment of *mehar* instead of promised for future payment are the changes in the institution of marriage of the Dudhwala.

Nuclear families are most prevalent among the Dudhwala. Sometimes conflict between women in joint families develop whenever there is a challenge to the authority of the elders. Confrontation among the brothers occur over sharing of ancestral property results in the setting up of nuclear families. Both sons and daughters have a right of inheritance although a daughter gets less than the son. The eldest son succeeds as the head of household on the death of his father. They maintain cordial relations within kin and the community members for religious and occupational relations.

The Dudhwala woman has the right of inheritance. Her advice is sought in domestic sphere. She actively participates in rituals. A few women contribute to family income by sewing clothes besides managing household duties. On the whole they enjoy equal status.

The first delivery takes place in the natal house of a woman following a ceremony *ghodharna* in the seventh month of pregnancy when her parents presents clothes, a coconut and sweets. The *fui* (father's sister) gives a name to the child on the sixth day of birth in a ceremony called *chatti*. The mother is treated as impure till the performance of *chillah* on fortieth day when the mother is bathed and is presented with clothes both for herself and her child and only then she is sent back to her husband's house. *Sunnath* (circumcision) of the male child is done by the doctor on the sixth day itself or when he is three years of age. *Bismillah* (initiation) ceremony is performed in case of the first male or female child in the family and also *balutarna* (tonsure ceremony) at Badiadh Dargah of Dhandhukha or a nearby local *dargaha* (shrines). A few perform *aqiqa* anytime before or alongwith marriage.

Marriage alliances are initiated by the groom's father through an intermediary. After both parties agree '*manganī*' or *sagai* (betrothal ceremony) is performed by inviting only five women from the grooms' family who present clothes and garland the bride. Permission of the *jamat* is sought before the performance of *nikah* which takes place after *johar* (afternoon prayer) or *Ishanamay* (night prayer) and followed by a feast hosted by parents

of the bride. Then, the bride is taken to her in-law's house where the nuptial ceremony takes place. *Valima dawat* is arranged by the groom's family on the day after *nikah*. The bride is sent to her natal home in the morning and brought back in the night for eight days and there after stays permanently.

The dead are buried within a few hours of death. Food is not prepared in the house of the deceased till the performance of *ziarat* on third day and till then, food is brought and served by near relatives or neighbors. A feast is thrown to all the assembled relatives and friends on fortieth day of death in a ceremony called *chalisma*. Before this, relatives visit the graveyard and *fateha* is observed.

The traditional occupation of milk vending has been completely given up due to the lack of interest of the younger generation and the availability of alternative occupations. Petty trade is now the primary occupation of the community. Very few are employed as teachers and technicians and electricians in small scale industries. They depend on the local markets. Wages are paid in cash. There has been a shift from their traditional occupation which has been diversified during last forty to fifty years.

They have a registered caste council Sabaria Urf Dudhwala Jamat with eleven or sixteen members executive selected once in three years. The Jamat collects a fixed fee from each household per year besides fee from both the parties in marriage and divorce cases etc. It also earns from those individuals who disobey traditional norms for instance, those who marry outside the community are socially boycotted and readmitted on a tendering unconditional apology alongwith a sum of Rs. 1,000/- to Rs. 1,500/- as fine. The amount thus collected is spent on helping needy persons in the community and poor boys are given school fee and text books. It manages the affairs of two *darghas* (shrines of Muslim pirs) in Ahmedabad city each with two trustees appointed for the purpose. The *jamat* is not functioning effectively for the last eleven years due to internal disputes over its property. The role of modern statutory council is limited to the implementation of welfare programmes.

Sunni sect of Islam is the religion professed. The entire community is affiliated to the shrine of *Badiadh dargah* of Dhandhukha where *tonsure ceremony* of the first child is

performed. They also visit local *dargahas* of Ahmedabad as well as the religious shrines of Ajmer, Nagaur, Hajipur. *Moulvi* (sacred specialist) is employed as spiritual guide and they also utilize the services of the local *Kazi* for the *nikah* ceremony and *Bhangisab* (assistant of Mosque) for bathing the dead. A few also believe in the institution of *pir-Murshd* (living spiritual guide). The festivals like Ramzan, Bakrid, Moharram etc are celebrated. A section being influence by the *Tableekh Jamat* practice inter-community marriages. They also undertake the Haj pilgrimage.

The Dudhwala women sing local Gujarati songs during rituals.

As a milk selling community, they had socio-economic interaction with all the neighboring communities and still very few who are giving horse cart on rent or special horse cart during marriage procession continue to have their relations. They maintain ritual relations among themselves. Commensal relations are restricted to other Muslim communities. Brahman, Vania, Lohar, Modi and Patel do not accept food from them. They also do not accept food or water from Harijans, Koli or Bhangi communities. Very few marriages with local Shaikh are reported. The community has its own graveyard and has access to drinking water and facilities of road and school. Entry to offices of public nature are shared with other communities. Very few participate in the public functions.

The level of literacy is gradually increasing. There are few advocates, engineers and a few teachers even among women of the community. They prefer modern medical care. A positive attitude has developed towards family welfare and after three or four children, women are going in for steralisation. Some draw benfit from self-employment scheme. They avail of facilities of electricity, post and telegraph, road, railway transport etc. A considerable number of members have accounts in co-operative banks from where they get loans to establish new business or expand business.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

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FAKIR

The term fakir has been derived from the Arabic word 'fakar' which means poverty. The Fakirs use the surname Shah or Shahi. According to Russel and Hiralal (1916), the Fakirs are divided into two groups, the *Ba Shara*, who practice celibacy. They are mostly distributed in the cities of Gujarat specially near the big *darghas* (tomb of Muslim religious pirs). Actually they do not have any permanent settlement or village. They live a nomadic life. They are a community of beggars. They speak Gujarati within their group. Those who can read and write, use the Gujarati script.

The Fakirs are non-vegetarian in food habits. Both pork and beef (cow) are prohibited to them. They consume chicken, fish, mutton, and buffaloe meat. *Bajri* (spiked millet) and rice are their staple cereals. Consumption of vegetables is moderate but they consume pulses like gram, tur, moong etc. Groundnut oil is used as the cooking medium. They also consume roots and tubers. Men take alcoholic drinks occasionally. Consumption of fruits is rare.

There are five divisions among them namely Junhasha, Mother, Rafari Khandan, Jalali Banwa and Sarbadi. Further the main four divisions of wider Muslim society namely Shaikh, Saiyed, Mughal, Pathan are also found among them. Saiyed hold the highest position in the local social hierarchy.

The Fakirs practise community endogamy and marriages mostly take place within the close kin circle. Both parallel and cross-cousin marriages are allowed and practised. Junior levirate and junior sororate are permissible. They prefer adult marriages. Marriages mostly take place by negotiation between parents but marriage by mutual consent between the boy and the girl also take place. *Chunk* (nose-pin) is the symbol of marriage for a woman. *Mehar* is paid instantly at the time of *nikah* (marriage). Monogamy is the common form of marriage though polygyny is permissible. They follow rules of patrilocal residence after marriage. Divorce is allowed but only to the male. Children become the

liability of father in divorce cases. Widow and widower remarriages are allowed. Divorcee of either sex can however remarry. Generally, remarriage takes place without any kind of elaborate ceremonies.

Nuclear type of families are predominant. Though extended type of families are also found. The eldest male member acts as the head of the family. Interpersonal relations and inter-family linkages are generally cordial. Joking relationship is maintained between a woman and her husband's younger brothers and sister. Avoidance relationship is also maintained between a wife and her husband's elder brothers and his father. Right of inheritance applies to the males only. Rules of succession goes to the eldest son. The number of nuclear families has been gradually increasing.

Women keep themselves confined to domestic duties and rearing of their children. On festive and ceremonial occasions they join their menfolk in begging. Their domestic duties include bringing drinking water. They actively participate in social ceremonies but do not take any interest in political activities. Their women have a low status compared to that of men.

During the seventh month of pregnancy, *kholo-bharo* (lap filling) ceremony takes place. It is performed in a very simple fashion. The delivery mostly takes place within the house. A midwife called *sngaini* (midwife) conducts the delivery. *Nur* (umbilical cord) is cut off by a knife or a blade. The *orr* (placenta) is buried at the back of the house. *Ajan* (prayer call) is whispered into the ears of the new-born child by a male member of the family. On the sixth day after birth they perform *chhatti* ceremony. Both mother and the child bathe. Jaggery is distributed among the children. The child is named on this day. *Aqiga* (tonsure) ceremony of the child takes place on twenty first day after birth. *Fatiha* (verses from Koran) is recited on this day. Between the age of six months to ten years of age, the boy is circumcised. For this the services of a *Hajam* (Muslim barber) are recured. Locally it is called *khatna*. *Khatna* mostly takes place in a group, which means that several children from different families are circumcised together.

Marriage among the Fakirs take place in two stages. One is *mangni* the final settlement of alliance and the other is the *sadi* the actual marriage. Three days before marriage *pithi* ceremony is observed, both in the house of the bride and the groom. Both the boy and the girl are anointed with turmeric paste and *mehandi* or

(henna). Women sing. On the day of marriage, *mandavo* (marriage booth) is erected in front of the bride's house. *Kazi* (religious priest) solemnizes the marriage rituals with the help of *Ukil* (pleader) and *sakshi* (witness). On this occasion also the women sing. All relatives are entertained to a feast. Next morning, the groom along with his family returns to their home after receiving *mameru* (gift articles from the maternal uncle). The ceremonial send off to the party alongwith the newly married bride is known as *bidai*.

The Fakirs bury their dead in the respective burial ground according to Islamic rites. The body is washed and covered with new clothes. It is laid on a wooden box, called *janaza* and carried to the burial ground. The grave is dug by an experienced person. On the the fortieth day, they observe the *chelemi* ceremony.

Their traditional occupation is begging. Now-a-days a section of the community works as daily wage laborers. Some Fakirs are attached to a mosque or *darga* (tomb) where they get a fixed amount from the *jamat* (council) for their services. Some of them give *tabij* to their clients and get remuneration in cash. Some of them have given up their nomadic way of life.

Their women folk sing traditional folk songs. A few of them are good *qawali* singers who frequently sing in the mosque.

The Fakir accept both cooked and uncooked food from almost all the castes and communities. They participate and attend all religious and ceremonial functions of the local Muslim groups. They accept both water and food from the higher Hindu caste groups but they refrain from accepting food from Bhangis or Chamars. They do not maintain any marital relations with other communities. They share the facilities of well and water resources, road, school with other communities. They receive the services of barbers and washermen. As the community is extremely poor, they do not have any scholars, entrepreneurs, creative artists, administrator, engineer and doctor from amongst them. No political leader of any stature has emerged amongst them.

The Fakir are not much conscious of formal education. Their attitude seems to be favorable towards modern medicare, they are not making good use of that. They show favourable attitude towards family welfare programme. But only a section of the community has been found to accept it. Majority of couples prefer three to four children. Drinking water facilities are available within their

vicinity. Their sources of water are hand pumps, piped water supplied by municipality and wells. Road, railway and Post Office facilities are accessible to them. Most of them use kerosene for lightening their houses. They use fire wood and cow-dung cakes for cooking. Some of their children have availed of the nutrition programmes through mid-day meal scheme at schools. Majority of them are getting ration through public distribution system. Though their attitude towards saving is favourable, they have nothing to save because of abject poverty and indebtedness. They go to the local Muslim *seth* (merchants) at the time of crisis and receive some amount.

Jyotirmay Chakraborty

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GADHAI

The Gadhai, a small community in Saurashtra, claim that they migrated from Rajasthan about five centuries ago. They first settled in Panchal of Chotila via Kutch and were employed by the Garasia Rajputs there and later on hearing of their faithfulness Kathi darbars brought them to Amreli district. They are used to herding cows and at one point of time they were known to be ready to give their lives while protecting their cows. So they were called *Goudheya* (meaning the protector of cows). The word *Gaudheya* in course of time has been corrupted to *Gadhai*. Another version states that *Gadhai* keep donkeys to run their nomadic errands of selling salt from one village to another and this etymological derivation means that they are the keepers of *gadha*, (donkeys) that is why they are referred to *Gadhai*. Their main distribution is in the districts of Amreli, Bhavnagar and Junagadh. Gadhai speak Kathiawadi and use Gujarati script. Some of them can speak Hind also. A few read the Koran written in Gujarati.

The Gadhai are non-vegetarians though strictly abstain from consuming pork or beef (cow). They take buffalo meat. *Bajra* and wheat are the common cereals consumed. Rice is occasionally taken. Available pulses and seasonal vegetables are consumed. Consumption of milk and milk products is rare. Fruit consumption too is occasional. Liquor is taken by a few occasionally and it is purchased from the market. Smoking of *bidi* is prevalent and chewing of betel leaves and areca nuts with or without tobacco is common. The important change that has taken place in their dietary habits is the sudden shift to vegetarianism as advised by one saint Gega-Apa who belonged to their community.

There are no subgroups amongst the Gadhai. Their society has thirteen septs called *ataks* and their main function is to regulate marriage alliances. Some times some *ataks* tend to sub-divide and in that case the main attack and its subgroup section do not enter into marital alliances. The thirteen *ataks* are Lalliya, Rathod, Swat, Musia, Gagaina, Ming, Saag, Zorena, Sayara, Memodia,

Lallagh, Kalia and Naar. The brother *ataks* are Lalliya and Lallagh, Rathod and Nar, Sawat and Kalia. The names of these *ataks* are mainly derived from the names of their original settlement, some notable ancestors or Rajput clans/lineages. All these *ataks* stand at an equal position. They consider themselves as Rajputs of Rajasthan but due to their migration and change in occupation and conversion to Islam their position has become modified. In the local social hierarchy of the Muslim communities they believe themselves to be higher than Sipai, Khatik and other communities. They consider themselves to be lower to the Rajput - Darbar groups. Other communities in the area perceive them as one of the low-ranking Muslim communities.

Community endogamy is the general rule. There have been four cases of inter-community marriages between the Gadhai and Sipai and this kind of unions are subsequently accepted. Two persons belonging to the same *atak* or two different brotherly *ataks* are not allowed to contract marriage alliance. The marriage of a man with his mother's brother's daughter is permitted. Parallel cousins are not allowed to marry. Marriageable age for boys and girls is 19-21 and 17-18 years respectively. Marriages are generally arranged by negotiation. *Sagai*, or betrothal is arranged even in childhood. Polygyny is permissible. Junior levirate is also permissible. Wearing of *odhni* is the symbol of marriage, for a woman. Gold ornaments to be given to the bride at the time of marriage is also negotiated upon. There are no cases of dowry payment. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce, or *talaq* though permissible under the *shariat* is discouraged. A widow and a widower can remarry.

Nuclear families are the predominant type. Vertically extended families are few. Within a few months the newly married couple set up another household but the social obligations and responsibilities are shared with the natal family. Avoidance relationship exists between the elder brother-in-law, and father-in-law and daughter-in-law. Joking relations exist between a man and his brother's wife and a man and the younger sister of his wife. Cross-cousins also share joking relations. Inheritance is male equigeniture; generally males inherit after the father's death or else in rare cases just before the death of the father. Succession is in the male line and descent is reckoned in the male line. Inter-

family relations mostly exist with the members of community and in rare cases with the other Muslim communities in the area.

Women do not have a right to inherit parental property. Gadhai women are engaged in agricultural operations in their own land and some work on wages. Some of them go alongwith their husbands from village to village for selling salt. Collection of fuel wood and potable water is generally done by the females. Women have a major role in the ritual spheres and in religious activities. They do not have a role in the mechanisms of social control.

Certain days of the months such as 3, 8, 13, 18, 23 and 28 are avoided for observation of rituals as they are considered inauspicious. *Seemanth* is observed in the seventh month of the first pregnancy. The female relations of the natal family arrive with new clothes, rice, sugar and ghee to place the same in the lap of the pregnant woman after which the woman is taken for confinement which takes place in the house of her parents. On the sixth day i.e., *chhathi*, both the mother and the baby bathe and the baby is given a name. Only at the end of five weeks the mother is allowed to work. *Aqiqah* ceremony (tonsure) of the child takes place within three years of birth. And after fifteen months of birth and within two years, *Sunnat*, (circumcision) is performed for the male children. For sometime after *sunnat*, the boy is fed with special food with less salt and chilli.

Betrothal ceremony involves exchange of some formal gifts of clothes between the prospective couple. Solemnization of marriage is simple. After the groom ritually attired reaches the bride's house five *kalam* or verses from Koran are read by the *Maulvi* and after that the consent for marriage is sought from both bride and the groom in presence of a minimum of two witnesses after which it is registered. Consummation of marriage takes place in the residence of bridegroom. On death, the body is perfumed and wrapped in new clothes. Prayers are offered by the *Maulvi* and the body is carried for burial in the *zanaja*. Again before lowering the body into the grave in east-west direction, so that face is placed towards Kabaa in a symbolic reverence of Kabaa, prayers are offered and the first sod of mud is thrown by the *Maulvi*. On the third day *ziarat* is observed when all the members of the community are fed after prayers. On the tenth day again prayers are offered in honor of the dead. The same is repeated on the day

of *chalisa* (fortieth day). On the fortyfirst day, all the members of the community bring sweets for the bereaved family for *shok bhang*, concluding the mourning.

A major section of the community is dependent on selling salt. These salt-selling trips stop for four months during the rainy season and also in the month of *Chaitra* (March-April) for in that month the Hindus abstain from purchasing salt. Generally, women accompany them in these salt-selling trips. A considerable number of them own agricultural land which is cultivated by themselves. And others depend on wage labour mostly in agricultural operations and some of their women are engaged in agricultural wage labour. Only a few of them are engaged in different services. The child-labour is prevalent.

Caste council exists in some of the Gadhai inhabited villages. In Jhar, the caste council consists of a *Pramukh* and three other members chosen once a year on the day of Muharram to settle disputes and to oversee the welfare of the community. In case of a non-amicable settlement of a dispute, they approach the statutory village panchayats for redressal. A few years back All India Gadhai Samaj, a modern caste association was formed after a meeting of the Gadhai community scattered in different areas. The aim of the association is to regulate the community, encourage, educational development and also to speak and work for the community to be included with in the list of the most backward classes by the government.

The Gadhai are Sunni Muslim by faith. A few of them attend the mosque for Friday prayers. A few of them read the Koran in Gujarati script. They observe Muharram, Id, Bakrid and also other festivals associated with Hinduism like Raksha-bandhan, Utthasini. One of the members of the Gadhai community, Gega-Apa has attained saint hood and he is worshipped alongwith other *Pirs*. Sathadhar, Ajmer-Shariff, Unjha, Lathi are the places where the shrines of their *Pirs* are located. They possess a tradition of folk-songs and folk-tales.

For Gadhai, inter-community linkages are restricted to the castes with in their villages both Hindu and Muslim. They can take food and water from all caste Hindu communities and also from all Muslim communities; there are no connubial relations as such but there are instances of marital alliances with another Muslim

community, Sephi. The Hindu communities which are considered superior to them do not take food and water from them and there is no instance where they can interact at that level. Political leadership has emerged at the villages and district levels.

According to the Bakshi Commission, the percentage of literates is around 15%. But reportedly it is much less. Female literacy is practically absent. Education at the school and college level is minimal. Even now most of the male children do not attend school and female children not at all. They generally depend on *Bhuva* and *Amil* for the treatment of the ailments. Adoption of modern family planning methods is only marginal. A few of them have obtained government loans through various schemes for the purchase of hand carts for transporting salt. Drinking water facilities are available and a few of them have electricity in their houses. They use insecticides, chemical fertilizers and organic manure. Banking facilities for savings and investment are rarely utilized.

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GALIARA

The Galiara a small community, derive this name from the term *gali* which means indigo. People who are engaged in the occupation of indigo extraction and dying are called Galiara. They are distributed throughout the state. Regarding their origin it is believed that roughly four hundred years ago some Rajputs migrated from Marwar to Junagadh in search of a livelihood. The Galiara are the descendants of those Rajputs who converted to Islam under the influence of a Muslim, Masabhai. They are mainly distributed in the districts of Bhavnagar, Rajkot, and Junagadh. Gujarati is spoken within the community while with outsiders they speak is Hindi. They use Gujarati script.

The Galiara are non-vegetarians, consume fish and beef occasionally. Their staple food is wheat or millets. All seasonal vegetables are consumed. Ground nut oil/ palmolin oil are used as cooking medium. Along with tea, coffee and various non-alcoholic drinks are also part of their diet. They hardly consume alcohol. Smoking *bidi*, chewing *paan* or (betel) are also popular habit. They consume fruits occasionally.

The Galiara have various *ataks* (clans) like Makwana, Rathora, Wara, Sarvoia etc. The Sarvoia *atak* is divided into Dosani - Savoia, Thebani - Sarvoia and Rpani-Sarvoia. The clan names like Rathore, Chowhan, Sarvoia, symbolize their earlier Rajput entity. It is reflected in their surnames also. As recent converts to Islam their self-image is considerably low in comparison to other Muslims at the regional level. They are also perceived to be of low social status by other Muslim communities.

They Galiara strictly follow endogamy at the community level. They choose their marital partner either from the same *atak* or from any other *atak*. There is no hard and fast rule regarding clan exogamy. Only cross-cousin marriages are permissible. Marriageable age which has been increased is reported to be eighteen years in case of females and twentyone in the case of males. Negotiation by parents or by elders of the family is the

natural way of contracting a marriage. They follow the rules of patrilocal residence after marriage. Divorce or (*talaq*) is permissible but such cases are rare. Widow remarriage is permissible and encouraged; the individual marrying a widow or a divorcee is rewarded by the traditional caste council by a cash award of Rs. 250.

Nuclear families are more common than extended families. Within families avoidance relationships are reported between mother-in-law and son-in-law, between daughter-in-law and father-in-law and between a woman and the elder brother of her husband. They follow the rule of male equigeniture in case of division of ancestral property. According to *Shariat* ten percent (2 anas) of the total ancestral property should be given to the females. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family in the absence of father.

The women have a significant role in the household, performing essential functions such as collection of fuel, fetching potable water etc. Women contribute to family income to some extent by working as day labourers. They are also consulted in decisions affecting the family. In socio-religious spheres, women have a significant role to play but even the status of women is comparatively lower than that of male.

The Galiara observe a pre-delivery ritual in the seventh month of pregnancy (*satmasa*). The first delivery takes place at the natal home of the mother. A trained nurse looks after the pregnant woman at the time of delivery. The new born is given its name by its *tafi* (father's sister) on the sixth day after birth. The *mundan* (tonsure) ceremony is observed in case of male children between six days to one month of age. They also go to *Datar darga* which is situated at Junagadh, performing of tonsure (shaving of head) if they are bound to fulfil any kind of vow. This ritual is called *chaora*. The circumcision done by a doctor is a recent phenomenon but they preferred circumcision to be done by *Hajam* (barber) in earlier times. The marriage (*nikah*) is performed at bride's residence. Before, the actual marriage ceremony rituals of *magnl* (betrothal) and *samorta* are also performed. After betrothal the actual marriage ceremony (*nikah*) takes place before *Muharram* festival. The *nikah* takes place within a day beginning with the erection of the *mandap* at bride's house three days prior to the

marriage. The bridegroom along with his relatives goes for the ceremony in the morning and returns in the evening. The bride's father gives a feast at noon. The *Kaji* performs the marriage, after taking the bride's and bridegroom's consent the marriage is registered.

The dead are buried (*dafan*) in the nearby burial ground. The *dafan* is followed by three systems, *Gulbaguna*, *Bagli* and *Sanduki*. Prior to burial the corpse is bathed and covered in a white cloth after which it is placed in a *janaja* (coffin box) to be carried to the burial ground by relatives and friends. After three days, all the relatives go to the burial ground where they pray (*dua*) for the dead person and this is called *zeharat* (mourning). The *Dasama Ka zeharat* is held on tenth day. A feast is given to the relatives on this day.

The Galiara extract indigo from indigo plants (*gali*). Dyeing of blankets and turbans of princely families was their traditional occupation. With the advent of industrialization and synthetic and commercial dyeing methods, the traditional economic structure of the community has been affected and they have been compelled to shift to non-skilled day labour, such as plying push carts and agricultural labour. A few of them earn their livelihood through running small grocery shops. A few petty businessmen are also to be found among them. Some of them are also engaged in other forms of jobs/ services.

The Galiara have their traditional council which settles disputes such as marital problems, divorce and also the contracting of marriages. This council works at the inter-regional level. The President of this council is elected by the *karobharies* (members) for a period of three years. There are nineteen members (*Karobharians*) elected by voice vote from the five villages. This council is homogenous in nature. Sometimes they go to the court to seek better judgement only after consulting the members of the council or the President. Disregard of traditional norms is treated as a great offence and defaulters are punished. The modern statutory panchayat like gram- panchayat exists but the attitude of the community towards statutory panchayat is not favourable.

The Galiaras belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. They celebrate *Muharram*, *Ramjan*, *Id-ul-fitr*. and *Id-ul-zoha*, festivals with great

enthusiasm. Besides these they also celebrate *Id Milad* and *Equrma Sarif*. On the occasion of *Eqarma Sarif* they devote themselves in the name of *pir* of Baghda. They also attend the fairs of *Garib Saha Baba Ka Darga*, *Torasha Babu ka Mela*, *Gabia Shaha Baba Ka Mela* and *Balocha Baba Ka Mela*. Family members are affiliated to the various pirs.

Traditionally the Galiara community is linked by commensal relations like acceptance or exchange of water and food with the other Muslim communities but marital exchanges do not take place. They visit the household of the communities like Vania, Rajput, Brahman etc. but do not accept water or food from them. In earlier days the Galiaras could not enter temples and share wells with neighbouring Hindus.

The Galarias are well aware of the development programmes which have been initiated by the Government after independence. The percentage of literacy among them is low. The majority of them cannot avail of formal education due to their economic backwardness. Boys drop out from formal education. While girls are not encouraged to get formal education. They show favourable attitude towards modern medicare rather than towards indigenous traditional medicines. They have not responded fully towards the ongoing family planning programmes. They avail the facilities of drinking water and electricity. Very few among them have benefitted by the IRDP programme. Almost all the households are having the radio sets but T.V is very rarely found. Firewood (*lakri*) and kerosene oil are popularly used as fuel resources. They benefit by the mid-day meal scheme in schools. Most of them get their food grain rations through fair price shops. Their attitude towards savings is not favourable owing to poverty.

S.K. Nandy

GAMIT

The Gamits are the fourth largest group amongst the scheduled tribes of Gujarat. Presently, the Gamits are distributed in Surat, Valsad, Dangs and Bharuch districts. Their main concentration being however, in Surat District. Their population in Gujarat according to 1981 Census is 250837. The Gamit speak a dialect of their own, The Gamits communicate in Gujarati with outsiders and use the Gujarati script.

Traditionally, the Gamits are non-vegetarian, eating mutton, fish, eggs and fowl. Rice and *jowar* constitute staple food for them but consumption of wheat has also increased. Rice and *Charaki dal* (chillied pulse) is the favorite food item. The Gamits eat pulses of *wal*, *tur*, *urad*, *moong*, *chawla* and gram. They use *doliya* (*Bassia latifolia*) oil in rainy season and groundnut oil for the rest of the year as cooking medium. The Gamit consume wild roots and tubers. *Ind* (bamboo) is pounded and is used to make enlivened bread. It is eaten with fish. They take tea. They rear cows and goats for milk. Use of vegetables is on a small scale. They take seasonal fruits. They are fond of alcohol. They brew country liquor themselves from the fruits of *mahua* and *jaggery*. They sell it also. They smoke *bidi* and chew tobacco. They make *lapsi*, *puri*, *bhajiya* and *paratha* on special occasions.

The Gamit are an endogamous group having a number of exogamous clans such as Gowali, Desai, Kuwar, Kumar, Valvi, Madvi etc. The clans have their own deities. The clans are equal in status. They are ranked below the Dhodia and Chaudhary tribes but are placed above the Kolcha, Warli, Dubla and Kokna tribes.

The Gamits are monogamous, but they are also found to practise polygyny. If there is infertility or insanity in case of the first wife, they may marry a second wife. Sometimes, if a man has considerable land, he may go for more than one wife to get help in agricultural operations. Marriages takes place through negotiation, the age at marriage for girls varying from 14 to 20 years and for

boys from 18 to 25. Instances of marriages by mutual consent also exist. Sometimes, a couple may start living together after getting the approval of parents and the village *panch*, but without undergoing marriage rituals. Marriage rituals are performed when they become financially capable. The system of marriage by service known as *khandaiyo* is also prevalent among them. In such cases the boy serves the would be father-in-law for a specific period, staying at his wife's place. The symbols of married status for a woman are *mangalsutra* (necklace) and *sakla* (anklet). The system of bride-price is prevalent. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce and remarriage (*pachali*) are permitted. In divorce cases, the aggrieved party is paid the compensation, and the children become the liability of the father. If a married woman elopes with another man, her second husband has to pay double the amount of bride price paid to her first husband. If the woman goes back to her father's place, her father returns the bride price. Remarriage of widow and widower are allowed. The systems of junior sororate and cross-cousin marriage (FSD) are prevalent in the Gamit community.

Nuclear type of family is common. Extended type of families also co-exist. Married sons construct their own house after the birth of their first child. They work jointly in the fields, but live and cook their food separately. Avoidance relationships exist between a woman and her father-in-law as well as with her husband's elder brothers. Contrary to this, joking relationship are maintained between her and the younger brother of her husband and between a man and the younger sisters of his wife. Rule of inheritance is based on male equigeniture. The eldest son succeeds on the death of his father. People co-operate in socio-economic and politico-religious matters.

Women do not inherit any parental property. The women collect fuel from the nearby forests, bring potable water from the well, look after the children, cook food for the family. They are expert in basket making and weaving mats. They earn and contribute to the family income. The women enjoy status equal to their men.

During the period of pregnancy the woman is not allowed to go near the cremation ground and to certain trees which are known to be the abodes of evil spirits. At the time of delivery they take the help of local midwives from their own community. *Dam* (scar)

is made on the chest of the child after four to five days of the birth. With the help of a hot needle, by the *Bhagat*. *Chhatti* and naming of the child is done by the sister of the child's father. *Mundan* (head shaving ceremony) is held forty days after birth. The maternal uncle shaves the head of the child. Once the boy's side decides the girl, they invite the girl's side and fix up the amount of bride price. This is followed by *bade chandle* (engagement). Marriage is solemnized in the girl's house. *Hast Milap* (joining of hands) and exchange of garland between bride and groom takes place. The bride-groom's party along with the bride return to the groom's house. Consummation of marriage takes place the next day.

Children below the age of two are buried and pollution is observed only for three days. Otherwise they practise cremation. On the third day *dahda* ritual is performed. The house is thoroughly cleaned and plastered with water mixed with cow dung. They take purificatory bath. The man who officiates over a death-rite is known as *Savaniya* and the females are called *Sivani*. The corpse of women are wrapped in a red cloth while that of men in white clothes. Axe and *dharya*, are kept in the cremation ground in reversed position, to prevent the evil spirit. *Barma* is performed on the twelfth day. *Khatra* or (memorial stones) are also installed on Sundays.

The Gamits are agriculturists. In former days, they used to grow only one crop a year but now many Gamits have facilities for irrigation as a result of which they raise double crops. In canal areas, they cultivate three crops in a year. Besides they engage themselves in other occupations like agricultural labour, fishing, trapping birds, selling liquor etc. Gamits are also expert in basket making, mat weaving, carpentry and house-construction.

The Gamits have their traditional village '*panch*', or councils of elders. It is headed by the *Karbhari* at the village level. The post of the *Karbhari* is not hereditary. A *Rasthari* is elected from the members of that lineage who founded the village. The Gamits have also formed a bigger modern association, known as *Dakshin Gujarat Gamit Samaj* which is headed by a *Pramukh* who is assisted by a secretary and other office bearers. The cases which are brought before the community panchayat are generally regarding adultery, divorce, breaking of engagement, quarreling

and disputes of economic nature. The *Dakshin Gujarat Gamit Samaj* is bringing about social reforms. The *Karbhari*, Police Patel and sarpanch of the statutory Panchyat settles inter-community disputes.

The Gamits claim that they are Hindu by religion. They worship a number of village deities as well as gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. They propitiate *Kanseri Mata*, *Mari Mata*, *Wagh Dev*, *Ondariya Dev*, *Kaka Baliya*, *Raisari Devi*, *Gowal Dev* etc. They visit the shrine of *Divali Madi Mata* to get good crops and to be cured of the ailments. The practise of ancestor worship is also prevalent among them. They also worship Mahadeo, Ram and Hanuman. Much of this worship is officiated by the *Bhagat*. They celebrate Holi, Dhuleti, Navratri, Daseura, Diwali, *Diwasa*, Rakhi, Wagh Baras, Sheetala Satam, etc. They visit Unai (Unai Mata), Amba Mata, Goligarh etc.

The Christian churches at Unai and Vyara have converted a fairly good number of them to Christianity. The converts continue to follow the traditional social customs. They have also come under the influence of several other religious sects like *Sat Kaiwal*, *Sati Pati Pratha*, *Moksh Margi*, etc.

The Gamits make floor design locally known as *okari* also. They make baskets, weave mats and also make ropes. They have a rich oral tradition and are very fond of dancing and singing. The musical instruments used are flute drum, *dumda* and *pawri*.

The Gamit have inter-community linkages with neighbouring tribes and communities. They avail of the services of the Lohar (blacksmith), Suthar (carpenter) and Kumbhar (potter) for different socio-economic purposes. Commensal norms with the higher communities and the communities which are at par with them are maintained. They have close relations with the Choudharys and the Dublas. They share the facilities of wells for drinking water with other communities. A large number of them are receiving higher education and a fairly good number of teachers, engineers, doctors and administrators are there. There is much political awareness among them. There is one M.P. and several M. L. As. from this community. Landlord-tenant, cultivator-laborer and employer-worker relationships also exist.

There is a sharp increasing trend in the level of education. Girls are also being educated and they have entered into private

and govt. jobs. They use both modern and traditional medicare. Their attitude towards family welfare programme is favourable.

They get drinking water from wells and handpumps. They get loans, subsidies, for purchasing motor pumps, buffaloes etc. They make use of the media and communication system. Gamits use fire wood and kerosene as fuel. Irrigation facilities have reached large number of Gamits through canals and wells. Mid-day meals are provided to children in the schools. They avail of the facility of public distribution system (ration). Banking facilities are available. They are dependent on money lenders and shop-keepers.

L.N. Soni

GANCHA

The word Gancha means bamboo in Gujarati and the community derives its name from the occupation they practice. The Gancha claim their descent from Kshatriyas. Legend has it that a Kshatriya prince once went for hunting. He and the horse bathed in the same lake on the bank of which there was a temple of Bahucharajimata, the goddess who cursed them as a result of which they both became females. The prince carried some flowers in *vansa* (basket made of bamboos) to offer prayers to the goddess. The goddess was pleased and lifted the curse. She blessed the prince that his descendedents would hence forth be known as Gancha. This temple is at present located at Bahucharaj village in Chanasma taluka of Mehsana district. According to another account, a Bania by name of Venisha, was their original male ancestor. He became a woman after bathing in the lake near the temple of Bahucharaji's deity. He carried flowers in *gancha* (bamboo) to the deity and prayed. The goddess blessed and asked him to get engaged in *gancha* (bamboo) business. They are distributed in the districts of Kutch, Rajkot, Jamnagar, Surendranagar, Banaskantha and Ahmedabad. Gujarati is the language they speak among themselves, some are conversant in the Kachchi dialect also. The script used is Gujarati.

The Ganchas are vegetarians. They take *bajra* and rice as main cereals. Butter milk is taken after both the meals. Vegetables available in the market and pulses like *tur* (pigeon pea) *mung* (green gram) are consumed. Consumption of common fruits is rare. Alcohol is consumed by very few.

The Gancha have *exogamous nukh* (clans) such as Zala, Gohil, Padhlar, Panuar, Dhodia etc. All clans are equal in status. The clans serve to denote one's descent. They suffix the name of the clan to their name. The Ganchas consider that they are lower than the Brahmans and are at par with other communities but above Harijans and Koli. Other communities place them at par with the artisan communities. They claim to have belonged to Bhardwaj gotra.

Clan exogamy is the norm. Marriage take place when the girl is between 18 to 20 years and boys in between 22-25 years. Marriage is settled by negotiation. Monogamy is the norm. The wearing of a *mangal sutra* (necklace) *sindur* (vermilion) and *payal* (anklet) are symbols of married status of a woman. The Ganchas pay Rs. 200/- as bride price. Patrilocal form of residence after marriage is practised. *Chhutta-chheda* (divorce) is allowed but rarely occurs. Widow remarriage locally known as *gharbasana* is permitted but this does not find favour in *gnati samaj* (caste council). In case of a widower who remarries an unmarried girl all rites are performed. A widower is to wait for six months to one year after his wife's expiry. The Ganchas of Kutchch and Saurashtra were practising endogamy but now they intermarry.

Nuclear families are common though there are vertically extended families also. Father's sister brings a pair of clothes to the first nephew or niece at the time of naming ceremony while the maternal uncle gives new clothes, ornaments and gifts at the time of wedding of nephew or niece which is called *masalalana*. Only sons have the right to inherit property. The pattern of succession is through eldest son. The Gancha have a strong community bonds and they help each other in times of crises.

The Gancha women have a lower status than men. A woman has no right to inherit property, but they are consulted on matters of social and religious significance. Rituals are performed with active participation of women. In religious activities of the family, a woman is given equal importance. Women generally do domestic chores. Their women contribute to the family economy by weaving baskets and selling them in local markets.

A woman's first delivery takes place at her natal home. During the seventh month of first pregnancy, a ceremony called *semanth* is performed after which she goes to her parent's house for the delivery. These days child birth takes place in hospitals as Ganchas live in urban areas. A woman after delivery is considered impure for a period ranging from thirty five to forty days. The paternal aunt (father's sister) gives a name to the child, in a ceremony performed either on twelfth or on any day within a period of three to six months. On this occasion she presents new clothes. When a girls attains 15 years and a boy 17 years of age they are considered to have become adult. As the community is small,

marital alliances are initiated directly by the parents of either bride or groom. After being mutually satisfied with each other, a betrothal ceremony called *sagpan* is performed. The parents of groom give a saree, nose ring and a coconut to the bride's family. The parents of the bride return the coconut and one rupee symbolizing confirmation. The wedding takes place within three years of betrothal. Vaisakh and Phagun months in summer and Mah month in winter are preferred for weddings. The duration of wedding varies from one to two days. All rituals like *Ganeshpoojan*, *mandoparan* (erection of wedding booth) are performed and it concludes with four circumambulations of the sacred fire. After the wedding feast is over the bride is sent along with one or two relatives to the groom's house. The consummation of marriage follows after seeking blessings of the clan deity.

The dead are cremated except children upto one year of age, who are buried. The ash is collected and left at the river bank or at seashore. A Brahman priest perform *barmo* or *uttar kriya* on twelfth day as per Hindu custom and five to six Brahmans are fed on this occasion. The death anniversary is performed if one can afford to do so.

The forest is the main source of earning livelihood for the community. Basket making which is popularly known as *latta ka kam* (bamboo basketry work) is the traditional occupation of the community. Some work in the government or private institutions. They also work also in shops, printing presses etc. There is a decline in the demand for baskets, which is compelling them to shift to other vocations.

The Gancha community has a caste council called *Gancha samaj*. This council is a registered body and it operates at the local level, in Mandvi area in Kutch district. This caste council used to impose a penalty of a holding feast for the community whenever the offense of marrying a girl from the Veraval section of the Ganchas was reported. The statutory panchayat is concerned with welfare and developmental work. The caste council has lost its importance since the introduction of panchayat.

The Ganchas are Hindu and Vaishnavites. They believe that a person has to wake up before sunrise, bathe and worship Lord Krishna. A person has to take bath again if he answers nature's call during the day. Bahucharaj mata of Bahucharaj village of

Mehsana district is their chief diety. This deity is also worshipped by the eunuch community of Gujarat. Besides, each clan has its own deity. The clan members seek blessings for a newly married couple before they start their married life. The Ganchas go on pilgrimage to Nathdwara and Haridwar. Holi, Deewali, Navratri are the festivals celebrated by them. A Brahmin priest belonging to Gaur clan performs rituals on the occasions of marriages and death.

Basket making has been their traditional occupation which they practice even today.

The Ganchas had social and economic links with the surrounding Bania and Jain with whom they accept and exchange water, cooked and uncooked food. Although on account of its numerically small size, the community has no objection to exchanging girls in marriage with Jains and Brahmins; there has been no positive response from these communities and no instance of this nature has been reported. They share water sources, facilities of road, school, crematorium, temple, panchayat etc. with other communities. Owing to small size of community, they do not participate in politics at the local level. They have cordial relations with their customers.

The level of literacy is low and the number of those educated above the secondary level is still lower. The community members make use of medical facilities as they reside in urban areas. They have positive attitude towards family planning. Nearly all the members have piped drinking water facility and electricity in their houses. Hardly any one has benefitted under IRDP, Employment Guarantee schemes or Employment schemes. Most of the Ganchas have radio/transistor. Roads and Railways, post, telegraph and telephone facilities are utilized to the utmost as Ganchas stay in urban areas. Public distribution system (ration) is within easy reach of the community. A number of them have savings bank account in banks.

Md. Azeez Mohidden

GANDHRAV

The Gandhrav claim that they were musicians and singers in heaven in the service of lord Indra. They relate themselves to the legendary Gandharvas of the epics. And as such they are referred to in the great epic of Mahabharata. Once they were cursed in heaven by lord Indra who ordered them to take birth on earth. They took birth accordingly and came to be known as Gandhraps or Gandharvs. They are distributed in the districts of Mahesana, Panchmahal, Kheda, and Ahmedabad. They mainly live in urban areas but are also to be found in rural localities. With their neighbours as well as with the kin group they speak in Gujarati. Gujarati script is used.

The Gandhrav are strictly vegetarian in their food habits. Their staple food includes wheat, rice, maize, pulses and vegetables. Their cooking medium is ground nut oil. They strictly prohibit intake of liquor. They consume seasonal fruits. As a special food they feed sufficient *ghee* to a pregnant and lactating women and prepare *sera* prepared of wheat, ghee, sugar, or *gur* and ginger (milk) for them.

The community has a number of gotras which are exogamous and regulate matrimonial alliances. Some of the gotras are Kashyap, Bhardwaj etc. They claim Brahman status by citing the similarities of *gotras*. Neighbouring Brahmans and others communities place them after Brahmans and Rajputs and at par with Targala or Bhavara in the social hierarchy.

The group is an endogamous unit having exogamous gotras. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. The marriageable age of males and females being sixteen and eighteen years respectively. Marriage by negotiation is the prevalent mode of acquiring mates. Vermilion and bangles are symbols of marriage for women. Dowry is paid both in gifts as well as in kind. They have patrilocal rules of residence. Divorce though permitted is looked down upon and is resorted to in extreme cases. Remarriage or *natra* is also permitted, having brief rituals.

There are more nuclear type of families in comparison to joint families. Parents love their children and give them proper guidance. Reciprocally children show respect and fear towards their parents and elders. Son-in-law and daughter-in-law observes avoidance with mothe-in-law and father-in-law respectively. Maternal uncle and father's sister play an important role during various life cycle rituals. Joking relation exists between the man and the younger sister of his wife. The eldest son succeeds the father.

The Gandhrav woman occupy an inferior status in comparison to that of males. They collect fire wood for cooking, bring fodder for the cattle and take active part in religious and social rituals but not in politics. They take care of the household and work in kitchen but family management and decision making power remains in the hands of male.

Godhbharna or *srinant* is a pre-natal ritual and is observed during the seventh month of first pregnancy only. It is held in the husband's house. In this ritual married woman with all her children alive, ceremonially places coconut, wheat etc. in the lap of the pregnant woman. After this the pregnant woman goes to her parent's house for the delivery. Naming ceremony and *suraj* puja is observed on the sixth day after birth. On this day they worship their *kula devi*. Naming of the new born is done by the father's sister. Sacred thread ceremony or *janey* is held only for the boys between nine and eleven years of age. Some of them do not observe the function due to their poor economic condition.

Marital alliances are settled through a *sagai* or betrothal ceremony. In the function the bride receives gifts from the groom's side. The foreheads of the bride and the bridegroom are marked with *Ranuku* or sandal wood paste. Three to four days before the actual marriage they worship Lord Ganesh and thereafter *pithi* ceremony takes place (anointing turmeric paste). They take out a procession called *varghoda*. On the day of the marriage the groom arrives along with his relatives and friends to the house of the bride. Marriage takes place at the bride's house. Marriage rituals consist of *hastamilap*, *fera* round the holy fire by the bride and groom, and *kanyadan*. Next day the groom takes his wife to his parental home. Consummation of marriage takes place there.

They cremate the dead. Before cremation they bathe the corpse in hot water, after which it is carried to the crematorium in a bamboo bier. On the third day after cremation the chief mourner collects the ashes which are immersed in the river. The eldest son acts as the chief mourner and kindles the pyre. They observe death pollution for thirteen days. On seventh or eighth day they observe an initial purificatory rite. *Shradha* ceremony is observed by them officiated by a Brahman. Death feast is also arranged. This marks the end of pollution period.

The Gandhrav have a council of elders and not a formal *panch*. This settles the social disputes between the members. The Local statutory panchayat takes care of the proper implementation of the Government plans for social, economic and educational development.

The community professes Hindu religion. They worship all the Hindu gods and goddesses. Their community deity *Harshad Bhavani* is propitiated whose temple is in Ujjain (M.P.) especially during Dashera, *Pataesewri* and *Kalimata* at Patan are their regional deities besides Mahadev. They observe religious fast or *vrata* namely, *Gauri vrata*. They visit Somnath and Hardwar as places of pilgrimage. Their sacred specialists are from the Audichya Brahman community.

In any social gathering or local fairs they are called for singing and dancing. They have linkages with revered communities. They accept and exchange food and water with Targala and Harijan or any other lower caste people. They have given their daughters in marriage to Brahmans. They share local drinking water resource facilities of school, crematorium etc., with others. Modern inter-community linkages are also well marked in their society. They have teachers, administrators and scholars among them.

The over all status of literacy and education is very low. Now they are sending their girls also to school. Very few of their women have taken to the nursing profession. They avail of modern medicare. Also they follow indigenous health practices. Towards family welfare programs they have a positive attitude. Good road facilities have brought them closer to other people. They are aware of various developmental programs of government and some of them availed of the benefits of such programmes. At home they avail of facilities of electricity. They use fire wood, coal, cow-dung

cake etc as fuel. In their fields they use organic manures. They avail of the other facilities of government like nutrition programme, Public Distribution system etc. Only very few of them use the local banking facilities.

D. K. Nanda

GARMATANG

The Garmatang claim that they are the descendants of the great monk Matang and consider themselves as the *guru* or *gor* (religious priest) of the Jadeja Harijans and the Maheswari Meghwals. There is no difference in social customs, dress, ornaments and language between them and the Jadeja Harijans (Surashtrani Pacchat Komo Vo.-1-473). The Jadeja Harijans and the Garmatangs, both, have migrated from Kutch to Saurashtra. The Garmatangs are distributed in Jamnagar and Junagadh districts. According to 1971 census their total population records to 899. While 1981 census records their population to 292. They speak in Kachchi dialect within their kin circle but speak in Gujarati with outsiders. Gujarati script is used. They have been enlisted in the category of Scheduled Castes.

The Garmatans are non-vegetarian in their food habits. Their staple food is wheat and bajri. Use of vegetables and pulses is moderate. They take fish, mutton, pork and chicken. Groundnut oil is the cooking medium. Both males and females take tea and smoke *bidi* (country cigarette). The most popular drink is *chhas* (butter milk). *Laddu*, *puri* and *sak* (vegetable) are prepared on ceremonial and festive occasions.

The Garmatang have number *shakhs* like Mada, Maliya, Vegbant, Lalan and Meghan. These are of equal status. They consider themselves higher than the Bhangis and the Chamars.

They practise endogamy but marriage alliances are also made with Maheswaris and Jadeja Harijans. The age at marriage is twelve to fifteen years in case of girls and fifteen to eighteen years in case of boys. Marriages are settled through negotiation. Mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter are given preference in marriage alliances. The popular form of marriage is monogamy, but sometimes they enter into a polygynous wedlock, due to infertility or prolonged illness of the first wife. A married woman wears *chunk* (nose pin) and colorful *ghagra*. System of payment of *dahej* (dowry) is prevalent. Residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce is permitted. Generally, it takes place due to maladjustment between

spouses and adultery. Both males and females are permitted to remarry in case of divorce. Locally, it is called *ghorogons*. Junior levirate and junior sororate unions are permitted. Widow and widower can marry again.

Both nuclear and extended types of families are found among the Garmating. In a family, the eldest male member acts as the head. Joking relations exist between a man and his wife's younger brothers and sisters. Similarly some sort of avoidance relationship is observed between a woman and her father-in-law and also the elder brother of her husband. Conflicts and confrontation occur very rarely. All sons have the right to inherit ancestral property and share equally; if there is no male issue then daughter/daughters inherit it. The eldest son becomes the head of the family after his father's death. Inter-family linkages are very good.

Women folk participate in almost all the socio-religious ceremonies along with others but not in any political activities. Some of them work as daily wage laborer to supplement their family income. A few of them know the art of weaving and knitting but they are mainly engaged in the food management of the family and raising of children.

During the seventh month of pregnancy, *srinant* or *kholo-bharo* (lap filling) is performed. The first delivery takes place at her paternal home. A *dayan* (midwife) conducts the delivery. Mostly delivery takes place within the inner corner of the house itself. The Garmating observe *chhati Pujan* on the sixth day after birth. On this day both mother and child are given a ritual bath and new cloths to wear. The child is also named on this day. Maternal uncle and close neighbours give some presentations to the new born.

Marriages among the Garmating mostly take place in two phases : *Sagai*, the final settlement of marriage alliance and *lagan* or *sadi*, the actual marriage. Marriage proposal generally comes from the family of the prospective groom to the girl's parents and if they agree, a date is fixed for *sagai* on which *chundri* (marriage saree) is given to the bride by the boy's father. The date of marriage is fixed by the priest. Three days before marriage, *pithi* (anointing turmeric paste to boy and the girl) ceremony takes place in the house of both the bride and the groom. On the day before marriage. The groom rides on the horse back and moves around the village in a procession. On the day of marriage the groom with *jan*. (groom's party) reach the bride's house. They are taken to *samaiya* (halting place). A

marriage booth *mandava* is also erected at the bride's house. The groom arrives at the *mandava* where bride's mother puts *tilak*. When the bride also comes to the *mandavo*. The priest ties the nuptial knot or *chada-chadi* between the bride and the groom. It is followed by *kanyadan* ceremony. The *jan* (party) is given a sumptuous feast. Next day in the morning after receiving the *mameru* (marriage gift) the party including the newly married couple returns to groom's house. Consummation of marriage takes place there. All the couples who get married during the year gather and in a group, circumambulate the holy fire during Holi festival attired in their wedding dress.

The Garmating bury their dead in their burial ground. The body is bathed and covered with a new cloth. On the eleventh day *sradh* ceremony take place in the house of the deceased. A communal feast is also given to the villagers. They also observe *varsī* ceremony after one year of death.

The Garmatangs are a landless community. Their traditional occupation was the performance of *puja* (worship). They also work on a daily wage basis. Mostly, they are the *gor* (family priest) of the Jadeja Harijans and the Maheswaris. At present, some of them are engaged in petty jobs and miscellaneous trades. The mode of their transaction is cash. At the time of marriage, festival and other rituals they receive some food-grains and cash as remuneration for rendering their priestly functions. There is no bonded labour. A section of their children are employed as attendants in restaurants and hotels or as daily wage laborers to supplement the family income.

The *gnat panch* (traditional council) exists at the regional level, controlling and supervising the socio-religious affairs of the community. It consists of ten executive members headed by a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and five executive members. All village and family disputes are settled by the *nat*. The activities of the *nat* is becoming a powerful force for the upliftment of the community by providing education and other facilities.

The Garmatangs are Hindu by religion and worship Lord *Ganesh* as their titular deity. A boy of sixteen to eighteen years starts formal worship of the deity. Besides they also worship Ram, Krishna and Hanumanji. They believe in spirits and ghosts, and also have faith in *Bhuwa* (shamans) and *Pirs* (Muslim saints). They also secure

talismans and *tabij* from them to neutralize the effects of evil spirits. They celebrate festivals like Holi, Diwali, Janamastami, Navaratri quite enthusiastically, like other Hindus.

A few of them are skilled in the art of weaving. They are also well-versed in singing *Ram Deo-ji-Ke-Bhajan* and *Kabir-bhajan* at religious functions and fairs.

The Garmatang accept both cooked and uncooked food from almost all the castes but other castes do not reciprocate this gesture as they are considered low. They maintain a very good linkage with the Jadeja Harijans and Maheswari Meghwals. They have their own burial ground. They are considered as *gor* (*guru*) of the Jadeja Harijans and they receive both cash and kind for rendering their priestly services to them. They maintain good relation with their employers. They receive the services of barber and washerman from time to time.

Their literacy level is very low. Only a few children go to school regularly, the majority dropping out due to economic reasons. Their attitude towards formal education is not very encouraging which is mainly due to their abject poverty. They avail of modern medicare facilities. The attitude towards family welfare programme is favorable. A few of them have benefitted under the employment programme and other welfare measures launched by the State Government for the scheduled castes. They use electricity in their houses. Fire wood and *chrannia* (cow-dung-cakes) are mostly used as fuel. Mid-day meal is being served under the nutrition programme to the students studying in schools. Public distribution system or ration is available to them in the locality. They depend on money lenders and shopkeepers during their period of crisis, with only a few availing of the banking facilities.

J. Chakraborty

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GARO/GARODA

The Garo trace their descent from the great saint Gargacharya, the brother of Sankaracharya, the *guru* of Asur. According to them during the time of Aurangazeb when Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam, some Brahmans started living in jungle to save their religion and life. Those who went in to the jungle lost their tradition and culture and were now known as Garo, Garoda, Guru, Guruwa or Pandiya. They are a priestly, astrologer community in the service of lower Hindu castes. According to the 1981 census their population is 52,549, being distributed in the districts of Mehasana, Sabarkanta, Banskanta, Panchmahal etc. The community has been listed under the category of scheduled castes. Within their kin group and with neighbouring people they communicate in Gujarati. They use Gujarati script. Some of them are proficient in Hindi also.

The Garo are strictly vegetarian consuming various kinds of pulses and vegetables available in the market. Their staple food is maize, wheat, rice, and *jowar*. Their cooking medium is palm oil and ground nut oil. Fruit consumption is occasional. Most of the menfolk are addicted to countrymade liquor. As a special food they prepare *ser* (*ata*, *gur*, *adrak*, ghee boiled in milk or water) and serve it to a woman during pregnancy and after delivery.

The community is also divided on the basis of territory. There are five village group Amalia Kherda, six village group Sodhru kherda, seven village group Balasinor Kherda, nine village group Jhsra Kherda and ten village group Mohida Kherda. These territorial divisions do not have a hierarchical order. The community is endogamous with exogamous clans or *goth*. Some of the clans are Kashyap, Parasar, Atraya, Gargacharya, Bhrigu etc. The Garo regard themselves as Brahman of "Susan Ved" and as such include themselves in the Brahman Varna. Other castes assign them a rank lower than the Rajput, Vantias and other clean casts.

Child marriage has been replaced by the adult marriage. Marriageable age for males and females is between 18 years and

20 years respectively. Marriage by negotiation is the most prevalent mode of acquiring mates. Monogamy is the common form of marriage but serial polygyny is also permitted. Symbols of marriage for a married women are *sindur* (vermillion) on their hairparting and bangles. Dowry is paid in kind and cash. They follow patrilocal rules of residence. Divorce and remarriage or *natra* is permitted. Either of the partner can seek divorce. These days some are seeking divorce in court.

Nuclear families are prevalent though joint families co-exist. Inter-personal relationship amongst family members is based on love, respect, affection etc. Avoidance relationships exist between a woman and her father-in law and similarly between mother-in law and sons-in-law. A man can have joking relations with the younger sister and brothers of his wife. It is an obligation on a person to look after his maternal uncle and parental aunts. Only sons inherit their father's property and get equal share. Succession is through the eldest son. Inter-family linkages are based upon fellow feeling and group sentiments.

The status of women among the Garo is inferior in comparison to that of men. Women assist in supplementing family income. They collect fuel and fodder, sometimes they work as day labourers. They take part in social and religious rituals but do not actively participate in politics. They are not decision makers in any family matter. They can not inherit property. These days they receive education.

During the ninth month of pregnancy, they observe a pre-natal ceremony called *srimanth* or *godhbharna*. After the ritual, father of the pregnant woman takes her to his home for delivery. This happens in case of first delivery. They observe birth pollution for forty days and after that the mother and the new born take a ceremonial bath. Naming ceremony is performed on the sixth day after birth. During the first Holi after birth they observe a ritual called *dhund*. Tonsure ceremony for the male child takes place when he is six years old. Sacred thread ceremony for the sons is performed between the age of nine and twelve years. Sagai or betrothal confirms the negotiation for marriage. The partners exchange a token amount of Re.1/- and a coconut in the presence of the members of the caste panch. The foreheads of the prospective couple are marked with *tilak* and a community feast is arranged

on this occasion. After consultation with a Brahman the parents fix the date of marriage. Principal rituals connected with marriage are *Ganesh sthapan* and *pithi* (smearing of oil turmeric paste on the bride and groom). On the day of marriage the groom along with relatives and friends, arrives at the bride's place in procession. Before starting his journey the groom worships the clan deity. The wedding procession is received by the mother of the bride. The groom touches the gate with his sword and then enters the marriage pandal. This is followed by *hastamilap* and *kanyadan*. Next day the groom takes his wife to his parental home. Consummation of marriage takes place there.

They cremate their dead. The corpse is bathed and carried to the cremation ground on a bamboo bier. Four coconuts are tied on the four corners of the bamboo bier and in the crematorium they offer *pinda*. They immerse the ashes in river water. They observe death pollution for twelve days. They do not consider Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday as auspicious days for concluding the pollution. On the twelfth or thirteenth day after death they observe *pindadan* (funeral ritual) and arrange a funeral feast. Community feasts held in connection with life cycle rituals are strictly vegetarian.

Majority of them do not have cultivable land. Traditionally they do the work of a Brahman priest in the houses of lower castes such as Vankar, Chamar, Khalpa, Nadia, Turi, Tirgar etc. Some of them are astrologers also. As a secondary source they engage themselves as day labourers, plying push carts, etc. A few of them are also in Government and private service. Children below fourteen years of age and women also go for earning.

The Garo have a council of elders called *panch* at the community level. It settles disputes related to marriage, betrothal, divorce, remarriage etc. In such cases social ostracism is practiced for an offender as a form of punishment. The members of the caste council are selected. Statutory panchayat initiate various developmental plans and programmes of Government.

The community has their own clan deities such as Shitla, Amba, Chamunda, Kalka, Khodiarmata, Meldimata, Laxmi, Saraswati, Ganga, Yamuna etc. In their life cycle rituals and during Dasera they worship their clan deity. They observe Holi, Diwali, Dasera etc. They visit Hindu Pilgrimage spots. They attend all local fairs

like Bara Ambaji and Chota Ambaji fair, Shamlalji etc. Some of them follow 'Paranami Dharma' or Vaishnavite sect and are the disciples of Pranatanthji. Still some follow Ramanandaji.

As a priestly class they attend to the life cycle rituals of lower castes groups but they do not inter-dine with them. In turn other higher castes such as Brahman and Rajputs also do not inter-dine with them. As astrologers they are consulted by Hindus and sometimes by Muslim communities too. Harijan and other low castes accept food and water from them. In the city or suburban localities they get tap water. They enjoy the facilities such as school, crematorium, entry into the *panchayat ghar* temple etc. Metalled road even in the remote villages has brought them closer to each other. Cultivator-labour relationships are cordial and based on mutual understanding.

Literacy level is low among them. They also send their girls to school. Traditional attitude towards health and medical care has changed and now a majority of them avail of modern medicare. They have a very positive approach towards family planning program. They are aware of different developmental plans and programmes of government such as IRDP, employment scheme etc., but they are yet to receive its full benefit due to low literacy and poor economy. They use wood, coal, cow dung as fuel. Some of them use the 'smokeless chula'. They are aware of the uses of chemical fertilizers and insecticides and organic manure. They avail of the facilities of different nutritional programmes. Public Distribution System through ration shops definitely helps them. Banking facilities are there but only a few of them are successfully using these for small savings and investments.

D.K. Nanda

GARVI

The Garvi are also called Gadhvi. It is stated that they migrated about two hundred years ago from Rajasthan to Junagadh and Bhavangar districts. Presently the Gadhvis are mainly distributed in Junagadh and Bhavnagar districts. They communicate in Gujarati both among themselves and with others. They use Gujarati script. Some are also conversant in Hindi.

The Gadhvis are strictly vegetarian. Their staple food is *bajra*. Sometimes they also take wheat and rice. They prefer pulses like *urad*, *moong* and *tur*. They eat several kinds of vegetables which are seasonally available. They use groundnut oil as cooking medium. Seasonal fruits are also consumed. They take milk and milk products such as curd, butter-milk, ghee and sweets on regular basis. They are fond of tea. Taking of alcoholic drinks is strictly prohibited. On festive occasions they prepare various sweet dishes as special foods such as *lapsi*, *khir*, *laddu* etc. Men smoke *bidi* and chewing tobacco is also common.

The community has five exogamous *ataks* (clans) such as Parmar, Jadav, Gohil, Leuva and Kabaria. These clans regulate marriage alliances. All the clans enjoy equal social status. These five clans have their own deities. The Gohils and Kabaria are associated with Khodiar mata, Parmar and Leuva are associated with Chamunda Mata, and Jadav is associated with Balard mata. They regard themselves as Sudras in the *varna* system but they place themselves above Harijans and Adivasis in the local social hierarchy. They place themselves lower than the Brahman, Bania, Darbar, Luhana etc. This position is conceded by other castes also.

The Garvi community maintains community endogamy and clan exogamy. One can not marry a member of one's mother's brother's clan. The institution of marriage follows the rule of monogamy. After two or three weeks of the birth of a female child, *sagai* (engagement) is arranged by groom's parents. Child marriage has been replaced by post-pubertal marriage. The girls are married at

the age of eighteen to twenty. Marital alliances are settled through negotiation. Symbolic marks of a married women are *kadla* (silver anklet) and *nothri* (nose stud). Bride price is paid in kind and cash. They follow patrilocal rule of residence after marriage. Divorce is permissible. Only the husband can seek divorce on grounds of maladjustment and adultery. Divorce compensation is given to the wife. The children are the liability of father while infants and toddlers remain the liability of the mother. Remarriage of widows, divorcees and widowers is also permitted.

Most families in this community are of the nuclear type though vertically extended type also co-exist. Avoidance relationships exist between the mother-in-law, and son-in-law, and between the daughter-in-law and father-in-law. Joking relations exist between grand parents and grand children. The rules of inheritance are based on the principle of male equigeniture. In case there is no male issue in the family the daughters inherit the property. The eldest son becomes the head of the family after his father's death.

The Garvi Women have a low status as compared to men. They contribute to family income. They participate in social and religious activities along with their men folk. The women work as agricultural labourers and casual daily wage labourers. Within their household they engage themselves in fetching potable water, and various other household jobs. But women do not participate in any political affairs and family expenditure is controlled by men.

The first delivery takes place at the natal home of the pregnant woman. In the seventh month of her pregnancy she is taken to her parent's village and they perform a ceremony. The pregnant woman is given a ritual bath and coconut and sweets, etc. are put in her lap. Delivery generally takes place in the house. A midwife from the community attends. They observe birth pollution for forty days. The mid-wife (*sainai*) is paid in cash or kind. Originally naming is done after seven days of birth by the child's father's sister. Tonsure ceremony is observed between six months and one year of age.

The marriage ceremony is performed at the bride's residence. The *sagai* (engagement) is performed in her infant stage. The celebration of marriage rituals are held at bride's residence. The marriage ceremonies are officiated by a *Gour* priest. *Mandap* (marriage booth) is erected. The groom arrives in procession (*jan*)

which includes kin and friends. In every corner of the *mandap* six earthen vessels are placed. The bride and the groom take four *fera* (circumambulation) around the *mandap*. A feast is hosted by bride's party. During the performance of marriage ceremonies the bride must wear *jimi* (petticoat) and *kandla* (silver anklet). Next day the groom returns to his house with the bride. Consummation of marriage takes place there.

The dead are cremated, prior to which the body is bathed and wrapped in new cloth. The corpse is laid on the pyre with its head towards the north. Eldest son acts as the chief mourner and put fire to the right toe of the deceased and then to the pyre. In case of female the youngest son does it. Mourners circumambulate the pyre four times after which they collect the ashes in an earthen pot for immersion in the holy waters at Guptprayag, or Tulsishyam, or Somnath. They observe death pollution for eleven days. They do not cook in their home for the first three days. On fourth day they eat sweets before the main meal. The death rituals are performed by the *Gour* priest.

The main economic resource of the community is land, though a good number of families are landless. Their traditional occupation is farming and working as farm labourers. Now-a-days they also work as casual labour in road construction. A few of them are engaged in government and non-government services. Many are engaged in animal husbandry and a good number work as teachers.

The Garvi have a traditional caste panchyat know as *choubatia*. Elders of the community belonging to different villages constitute panchayat. There is a *Patel*, who presides the meetings. This panch settles conflicts, quarrels regarding divorce and other cases. Offenders are punished by imposing cash fines or compelling them to host a communal feast. The office of the *Patel* is hereditary. The Statutory panchayat looks after developmental works.

The Garvi are Hindus and they follow the norms and conventions of the Hindu religion. *Gour* Brahmans are the community priests as well as the sacred specialists. During Diwali festival they worship their respective *kuldevis*. They celebrate many festivals such as, Janamastami, Diwali, Holi, Navaratri, Sivratri, Bhimaekadsi, Rathyatra. On festival occasions they prepare special dishes like

lapsi, khir, laddu. They visit temples of Mahadeva, Ram, Radha Krishna, Swaminarayan. They also visit local fairs.

The community has folk songs and folk tales. Songs are sung by women at the time of marriage. They are adept at playing musical instruments like harmonium, dholak, manjira.

The Garvi have traditional linkages with other communities at the occupational level. Being labourers they work in the land of neighbouring communities. They accept both cooked and uncooked food and also water from Brahmans, Bania, Darbar, Lohana etc. They join and participate in all ceremonial occasions of the above mentioned communities. But they do not accept water from Vankar, Chamar, Muslim, etc. and similarly Brahman Bania, Lohana, Darbar, etc. do not accept water from Gadhvis. The Brahman accept *sidha* (raw food). The Gadhvi collect water from ring wells and hand pumps. They share roads, schools, and crematorium with other communities.

Their literacy rate is quite low. At present children are sent to schools though girls are generally engaged in household duties. They avail of modern medical facilities though some of them continue to depend on traditional medicare. They have positive attitude towards the family planning programme. The communication medium is radio. Electricity has reached almost every household of the Gadhvi community. Their fuel resources are fire-wood, kerosene oil, and cow-dung cakes etc. Mid-day meal programmes exist in every primary schools as part of the nutritional programme. In each village, facility of ration shop is available and they make full use of it. They depend on local money lenders mainly and not on the banking system.

Biplab Das

GAVLI

The Gavli are mostly migrants from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. They came around hundred years ago in search of new economic opportunities. Gradually they have settled here. However, they still maintain marital alliances with their kin in Maharashtra or Madhya Pradesh. They are mainly distributed in the districts of Baroda and Rajkot. The Gavli are traditionally cow-herders. Hindi is spoken within the family and kin-circle. Most of them are proficient in Gujarati also. Both Devnagari and Gujarati scripts are used.

They are vegetarian. Cereals like *bajra*, wheat and rice are their staples. Groundnut oil is the cooking medium. They take available vegetables and fruits, milk and milk products are taken regularly. Very few among them take alcoholic drinks purchasing from market.

The community has several exogamous clans such as Hiranwar, Hajari, Bania, Phulsung, Phenwar and so on. The clans are named after the territories from which its members originated. For example, members of the Hiranwar clan are the original inhabitants of Nagpur. The chief function of these clans is the regulation of marriages.

The Gavli follow endogamy so far as the marital alliances are concerned. Junior sororate and cross-cousin marriages are permitted. Marriage is settled through regolation. Generally males marry on attaining 20 years of age and females after 18 years of age. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. Married women apply vermillion on their forehead and wear *mangalsutra* as the symbols of marriage. Payment of Dowry in cash is prevalent. After marriage the bride resides at her husband's house. Divorce is permitted. Remarriage is also permissible. Male children are the liability of father and female that of the mother.

Nuclear families predominate over joint families. Joking relationship between grand parents and grand children exists. A few cases of conflict and confrontation on property matters are

reported. Male equigeniture is the rule of inheritance. In the absence of sons the ancestral property is inherited by the daughters.

Women have a role in socio-religious affairs within the family. They enjoy a secondary status in comparison to male members. They are engaged mainly in household work. Normally women do not play any role in the political sphere.

A pregnant woman in the fifth month of her pregnancy is taken to her natal home for the first delivery. The child birth takes place at home. After delivery the mother is confined to a room for three days, while birth pollution is observed for five days. On the fifth day both mother and child bathe. The child is conferred its name, the Brahman generally selects it on the basis of its horoscope or *janampatra*. *Mundan* (tonsure) is observed in case of a male child and only clipping of hair is done in case of female children. This ceremony is performed at the time of Holi or Dasehra.

The entire marriage ceremony lasts for three days. Sometimes it requires more than three days where the marriage alliance is settled at a distant place. The marriage is settled through *nakki* ceremony in which the parents of the groom give a *sari* to the bride. Marriage is held at the bride's residence. Brahman performs the rituals connected with marriage, the most important of which is circumambulation of the sacred fire seven times by the couple. Bride leads the bridegroom. Both parties arrange feasts for the invited guests. Next day the groom returns to his home with the bride. Consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's house.

In case of death, the body is given a bath and then is clothed like a bride or bridegroom as the case may be before cremation. It is customary to pour a few drops of cow-urine in the mouth of the dead. The clothes, turmeric and flowers are used to decorate the corpse. Sons or maternal uncles and sometimes relatives carry the body to the cremation ground. Women are not allowed to accompany the funeral procession. The eldest son performs the rituals under the guidance of a Brahman. The fire is first put to the right toe and the dead body is cremated after being placed in a north-south direction. Ashes are taken to Nasik where it is immersed in the Damodar river. After cremation no cooking is done in the house of the deceased for three days. Relatives are preparing the meals. Pollution period is observed for thirteen days.

This period comes to an end after the *shradh* ceremony when the Brahman performs the *pinddan*.

Being cattle herders, milk production and selling milk was their traditional occupation. Very few are engaged in this traditional occupation. They generally sell the milk to neighbouring households and hotels. They believe that if they sell the aged cows the family may have to face the displeasure of supernatural powers. Most of them have shifted to other miscellaneous occupations like labour and service both in Govt. and the private sectors.

The Gavli depend upon the statutory council for seeking justice and settling various disputes.

The Gavlis are Hindu. Every clan has its own deities. Bania clan members affiliate to Ajjotmata who is believed to ride on a tiger. *Fulsung* clan members affiliate to Khandera. *Bhagat* offer worship and prayers to the household deities of the Gavli community. Rakhipurnima, Diwali, Navratri etc. are the festivals they celebrate. It is a traditional custom to decorate their cattle on the occasion of Diwali by applying color on the horns and tying *ghunghur* (bells) on their legs. Rakhipurnima is the most important festival they celebrate. During Dashehra or Navaratri, most of the community members observe fast for eight days. Janamashtami is also celebrated in an elaborate manner. It is also called as *Gokulastami*. It is celebrated on the birth day of Lord Srikrishna. During this time fasting is observed and offerings are made.

The Gavli do not accept water or food from the castes considered low, but accept from the Brahman and Rajput and other clean castes. They have an easy access to and sharing of wells and other water sources, with the members of other communities. They also have access to temples, *panchayat ghar* etc. As the traditional occupational structures have broken down due to the commercialization of milk products they have shifted to various other occupations as a result of which they interact with different people.

The Gavli are educationally backward and hence are not in a position to benefit from the development programmes. Their general attitude towards modern allopathic medicine is favourable. They have positive attitude towards the family planning programmes and birth control measures. The Gavli are exposed to the media

and communication facilities through radio, cinema. The radio is part and parcel of each and every household. Besides this they visit the cinema. Most of them are using electricity. They use cow-dung cake as fuel for cooking. Kerosene oil is also used. They have benefitted by the mid-day meal programmes in schools. Majority of them have benefitted by the public distribution system. They depend on the money lenders in time of financial crisis.

S.K. Nandy

GHANCHI

The Ghanchi are an oil pressing group and their occupation has contributed to their community name. They consider themselves a Shaikh group among Muslims. They say that they are converted Muslims. Enthoven (1920) pointed out 'It may be observed here that it is almost impossible to secure accurate statistics of these Musalman divisions at the time of a census, many caste members will simply style themselves Musalaman. Other will return themselves under the general term of Shaikh, which is to denote any Hindu convert. . . '. At present they are mainly distributed in the districts of Panchamahar, Sabarkanta, and Banaskanta, they mainly live in the urban areas. Most of them are conversant in Urdu. Within the kin group and with neighbouring people they communicate in Gujarati. They use both -Arabic and Gujarati scripts.

They are non-vegetarian. Their staple food includes cereals like wheat, rice, and maize and available vegetables and various pulses. They eat egg, fish, mutton and the meat of buffalo but abstain from beef (cow) and pork. A good number of them have domestic cattle. They take milk and milk products regularly. As a special food they also prepare *sera* for expectant and nursing mother.

The Ganchi have as many as thirty one *ataks*. These are Chintaman, Ghenas, Jabha, Pada, Shake, Bidani, Mughal, Bakkar, Shamol, Shikari, Bhatik, Khalpa, Kalu, Surti, Khatura, Mamda, Mitha, Mohan, Sindhi, Gariba, kurkur, Dhesli, Jadi, Rasidhbhai, Jujari, Keshri, Darbesh, Sugri, Sadamos, Pittal, Shaikh. All of these have equal status.

Monogamy is the usual norm they follow. The marriageable age of a boy and a girl is twenty and eighteen years respectively. Negotiation is the prevalent mode of acquiring mates. One can marry the daughter of one's mother's brother or the daughter of one's father's sister. Bangles are the symbol of marriage. *Meher* is assured at the time of marriage. Divorce is permitted after the payment of *meher*. Husband has the right to seek divorce. Divorcee,

widow and widower remarriages are allowed. They follow the rules of patrilocal residence.

Nuclear and joint families co-exist in the Ganchi society. Daughter-in-law observes avoidance relationship with father in law. So also the son-in-law observes avoidance relationship with his mother-in-law. One has joking relationship with the younger brother and sister of one's wife. Similarly a woman has joking relation with her husband's younger brother and sister but not with elder sister to whom she accords respect. Sons inherit the parental property and share equally. Succession is through the eldest son. Inter-family linkages are based on group feelings and fellow sentiments.

The Ganchi women do not inherit property. They have inferior social status in comparison to that of men. But in their daily life, women extend their assistance towards maintaining and in family economy, social and religious functions. They read the Koran in the home itself. One of the main duties of women is the collection of fine-wood and fodder for cattle.

The Ganchi observe pre-delivery ritual *godbharna* in seventh or ninth month of pregnancy. After the ceremony the pregnant woman is brought to her father's place where she stays during the period of confinement. For this ceremony they prepare a special sweet *methi ka laddu* which they distribute among relatives. The mother observes birth pollution for forty days. For other household members it is six or nine days. Naming ceremony is observed by them on the sixth day after birth. The child's father's sister selects the name of the new born. *Aqiqah* is performed in case of a male child. *Sunnat* (circumcision) is performed also in case of male children. Once negotiations becomes final the *sagai* or betrothal ceremony is performed. The boy's father give gifts to the bride. The bride's side host a feast. Marriage is not performed during the month of Ramzan. During the *nikah*, the *Moulavi* takes the consent of the bride for the marriage and for *meher*. If it is approved by her and also by the groom then the *moulavi* arranges for *nikah*. On the next day the groom takes his wife to his home. Consummation of marriage is held at the groom's place.

The Ganchi bury their dead. After death they bath the body and cover it with a *kafan* and then carry it to the burial ground. They carry it on a bamboo or wooden bier and bury after the

funeral prayer called *janaja namaz*. The eldest son acts as chief mourner. On the day after death women read the *fateha*. On third day they observe *ziarath*. On this occasion they put flowers on the grave. The period of mourning last for forty days. Community feast is also arranged.

Traditionally they are a community of oil pressers. With the advancement of modern technology i.e., mechanized mills this occupation has been less paying and the Ganchis have been forced to resort to other occupations. Some are carriage drivers while others are engaged as agricultural labourers or day labourers or as hawkers and vendors. Some of them are also in small business and a few have their own transport organization. The economic condition of the community is poor and it results in the rise in number of day labourers.

The Ganchi have a informal council of elders which settle the disputes of intra-community nature. However, in disputes relating to criminal offence they seek justice at the court of law. Statutory panchayat looks after the proper implementation of programmes of the government.

The Ganchi profess Islam and belong to the Sunni sect. They observe all Islamic festivals such as Ramjan, Sabe-Barat, Inu-ul-fitr, Id-ul-zoha, Moharam, Bare-Barat etc. They visit Macca and Madina on pilgrimage. They regard highly the local pirs also. They also visit the local Hindu fairs and festivals i.e., Ambaji, Shamlaji fairs for some economic as well as social reasons.

The Ganchi have folk songs and folk talks. Traditionally they have linkages with a number of castes. They accept food and water from all other communities including some lower caste Hindus. On the other hand, the high caste people do not accept food and water from them. In villages they share water source as well as school and panchayat. Employee-employer and cultivator-labour relationship are based on mutual understanding.

The level of literacy amongst the Ghanchi is low. Female education is not encouraged. They rely on indigenous health care. Now a few are availing of modern medicare. The family welfare programme has not received positive attitude. Educated persons of the community are very much aware of the various developmental plans and programmes of government. Daily newspaper, radio, sometimes television are their source of news

about the outer world. They use wood, coal, cow-dung cakes as fuel. They use chemical fertilisers, insecticides and also organic manner. They avail the different nutritional programmes of government. Public distribution system of food grains through fair price shops are utilised. Banking facilities are there and some of them draw benefit from it.

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GANCHI/PINJARA

The community name has direct correlation to the fact of their occupational shift. They were cotton carders or Pinjara who abandoned this occupation a few years back and took to oil pressing (*ghanchi*). Ironically, none of them follow any of these two occupations at present. Mishra (1964) notes that "In addition to the traditional calling of threshing, which no longer suffices, they have taken to miscellaneous callings like oil-selling, small trade and private service. Since both the Ganchis and Pinjaras have taken to oil trade and since both have adopted the surname Mansoori, it appears probable that the two communities are near to one another and may have a common origin". The Pinjaras who had become Ganchi because of the tight control of *Jamat bandi* organization started calling themselves Ghanchi-Pinjara, and formed a separate community by itself distinct from both Ganchi and Pinjara. The title Mansoori is probably, adopted one, as Misra (1964) states. They are distributed in the districts of Junagadh, Amreli, Rajkot, Surendra Nagar and Bhavanagar. The Kathiawari dialect is spoken within the family and with kin groups. Gujarati and Hindi are spoken with outsiders. A few of them can speak and write Urdu. Gujarati script is used for Gujarati.

The Ganchi Pinjara are non-vegetarian but abstain from pork and beef. *Jowar*, *bajra*, wheat and rice are the common cereals they take. They take pulses and vegetables. Fruit consumption is occasional. Milk and milk products are consumed by all. Some take alcoholic drinks, though it is prohibited, purchasing from the market. Special food is given to pregnant and nursing mothers. Some of them take only 'cold food' during the month of *Shravan* or even during the entire four months of the monsoon as is the custom among the Hindus.

The Ganchi Pinjara are divided into different *gols* (marriage circles) like Bhadra Katla, Gujarati, Sorathia, Godhra Vala etc. These are territorial in nature. Sometimes the *gol* territories are altered to exclude or include some of its constituent villages. The

gols are divided into *thad*. There is no hierarchy either between the *gols* or amongst the *thads*.

Besides, the *gol* and *thad* divisions, they have different *ataks*, some of them being Kagatla, Varaya, Bavalia, Mavad, Salod, Kakani, Makad etc. These names are based on the names of their ancestral villages. There is no hierarchy among *ataks*. Prior to their conversion to Islam the rule of exogamy was not observed. Some of the Ghanchi Pinjara consider themselves as Sheikh who migrated from foreign lands. But, some of them consider themselves as indigenous converts to Islam and the name of their *jamat Vora Pinjara Mansoori Jamat* pin points their indigenous nature.

The rule of endogamy is strictly followed. Marriage with cousins both parallel and cross-lines are permitted but latter is preferred. Generally males and females are married around 20 and 18 years of age respectively. Marriages are arranged by negotiation. Polygamy is permitted but monogamy is the practice. Sorrorate is allowed in case of death of the wife or on divorce. There are no marriage symbols for a woman. Residence is patrilocal. Only males have the right to divorce. On divorce, *meher* is paid to the woman and all other valuables and sometimes even clothes given at the time of marriage are also returned to her. Maintenance is paid to the divorced wife for three and a half month *iddat* period. If there is a young child maintenance, it is paid for child till the age of eight years or till the time of *natra* (remarriage) whichever is earlier. Widow, widower and divorcee can marry again. A divorced woman do not marry a bachelor. The widow or female divorcee marry through a brief ritual *natra*.

A majority of the Ghanchi Pinjara live in nuclear families. The relation between the parent and the child is marked by respect and the relations between a woman and her parents-in-law are of the avoidance type. A man has joking relations with his elder brother's wife, wife's younger brother and sister. Property is inherited equally by all male children. Eldest son succeeds the father. The eldest male member is the head of the family. Inter-community linkages are maintained with the *thad* and neighborhood families.

The Ghanchi Pinjara women do not have a right to inherit parental property. Ghanchi-Pinjara women are engaged outside the house in economic activities of mainly agricultural and other

kinds of wage labour. They have a role in family management and also take part in decision making to some extent. The women's status is secondary to the males.

Khoda bharva (lap filling) also referred to as *saat masa/navmasa* ceremony is arranged during the first pregnancy of the woman in her husband's home. Her mother comes with some presents which are put in her lap and the first delivery takes place at her parent's home. After delivery, same day the baby is bathed but the mother bathes only on the third day. A call for prayer, *azan* is whispered into the baby's ear before the baby is suckled. The baby is named on the sixth day by his father's sister. *Aqiqa* ceremony (tonsure) is arranged within a year. When the child is four years four months and four days old the *bismillah* ceremony is arranged wherein the *Kazi* make the child read *namaaz*. *Sunnat* (circumcision) is performed for the male child within seven years.

Betrothal ceremony is arranged generally two years prior to the marriage. The family of the groom on every festival sends presents to the girl which are reciprocated. If the agreement of betrothal is broken, the offending party has to pay a heavy cash fine to the *jamat*. On the day of marriage the groom proceeds to the bride's house in procession and is made to sit in the marriage booth. Then the *Kazi* with two witnesses asks for the consent of the bride first and then of the groom for the marriage. After receiving the consent from both the *Kazi* record the same before the witnesses and thereby the marriage is solemnised. The details about the presents from both the sides including the *meher* is also recorded to and kept with the *Kazi*, or *jamat*. Consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's house.

Before a person breathes his last a few drops of honey is put into the mouth accompanied by a reading of the holy Koran. On death the body is washed, perfumed and shrouded in a *kafan* (three pieces in case of male or a cloth of five pieces in case of female) to be put in *zanaza* (bier). The *zanaza* is carried to the burial ground. The head of the body is placed towards west in a symbolic reverence of the *Kaaba*. Then the first *fateha* is read after taking forty steps from the grave. On the third day after death, the grave is visited and the prayers are read. On the fortieth day the final mortuary rites are observed and a feast is arranged. *Darvesh* is observed in the tenth month in reverence of the dead.

They have abandoned their traditional occupation and have taken to farming. A majority depend on wage labour, and agricultural labour. A good number of them are engaged in wage labour in factories and in miscellaneous activities of petty trade, construction work, tailoring etc.

Every *gol* of Ghanchi Pinjara has its own *jamat* which is headed by a President, Vice-President and a Treasurer. The executive of the *jamat* oversees the affairs of the community and formulate and enforce the customary rules and also do alteration if felt required. It settles the disputes and imposes cash fine on the offender. All donations, fees, fines etc. are used for the maintenance of community activities. The role of modern statutory councils is limited to developmental activities.

The Ghanchi-Pinjara are Sunni Muslims by faith and their conversion reportedly took place around seven hundred years ago. A few families believe in some *Pirs* (saints). Besides the *Kaaba*, the *Dargah* of Moinuddin Chisti at Ajmer is a major sacred centre for them. The *Kazi* or *Imam* is the sacred specialist. Despite their conversion to Islam about seven centuries back, they do observe some Hindu festivals like *Satam* and *Atham* in the month of *Sravan* (Hindu Calender), Holi etc. The major Islamic festivals are observed. Some marriage songs are sung during the marriage ceremonies.

The traditional ties exist with the *Kazi* and *Hazam* (barber). They exchange and accept food and water from all the Muslim communities. They do take an active part during the time of Holi festivities. Of late there has been less and less restrictions in giving, taking or exchanging food and water. There are no connubial ties at any level. The traditional *jajman* relations have been transformed into contractual ties. Their participation in political affairs is limited only to their community matters.

Literacy levels are moderate. However, their children particularly males attend schools. All children are generally sent to *madrasas* till they learn reading and in some cases writing of the Arabic script. They prefer modern medicare and the government health centres are largely utilized. A majority of their eligible females and some males have adopted modern family welfare methods particularly sterilization. Drinking water facilities exist. Some of them have availed of the different governmental schemes for self

employment by obtaining loans etc. They have electricity in their houses. Irrigation facilities are scarce but they make use of chemical fertilizers and insecticides. *Balwadis* are attended by their children and mid-day meal scheme has reportedly been with drawn in the area. Public distribution system and the banking facilities are availed of.

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GHANTIA

The name of the community is derived from their occupation of making stone-grinder locally called *ghanti*. These days they have left their traditional occupation due to advent of grinding machines and proliferation of grinding mills even in rural areas, which has mechanized the production of flour and spices. It is said that they migrated from Jodhpur (Rajasthan) about fifty years ago. They are distributed in the districts of Bhavnagar, Amreli, Rajkot, Jamnagar, Ahmedabad etc. Their mother tongue is the *Ghera* dialect. They also speak in the Kathiawadi. They use Gujarati script. Some are also conversant in Hindi.

The Ghantia are non-vegetarian. Their main cereals are *bajra* and wheat and common pulses are *moong* and *chana*. They take various kinds of vegetables which are locally available. Occasionally they prefer rice with mutton or fish or egg-curry. The cooking medium is groundnut oil. They consume tubers and roots. They take tea. Men and women take alcoholic drinks on festive occasions. Fruit consumption is extremely low. Only children are provided milk to drink. Men smoke *bidi* and are also in the habit of chewing tobacco. On festive occasions they also prepare special dishes such as *lapsi*, *khir* etc.

The community has four exogamous *ataks* viz. Lakria, -Besa, Maria and Saoda. In recent times they have changed the *atak* names like Lakria is now Parmar, Besa as Rathod, Maria as Makwana and Saoda as Solanki. All *ataks* enjoy equal social status. Each clan has its own *kul-devi* (goddesses). Their *kul-devis* are Momai, Visat, Kodiar and Maldi. In the local social hierarchy they consider themselves below Brahman, Bania, Banspodia etc. but above the Chamar, Bhangi, Muslim etc. Other communities do consider them as low.

The Ghantia maintain community level endogamy and *atak* level exogamy. They follow monogamous type of marriage, but polygyny is permitted. Junior sororate is permissible in their community. The girls are married between 17-19 years of age

while boys between 19-21 years of age. Marriages are settled through negotiations. Post-marital residence is patrilocal. *Kadla* (anklet) and *churi* (bangles) are the symbols of marriage for a woman. Divorce is permitted. If the husband seeks divorce he has to pay compensation and vice-versa. Divorce is sought due to mal-adjustment, adultery etc. Widow and widower re-marriage is permissible.

Most of the families of the community are of the nuclear type though a few vertically extended families co-exist. Inter-personal relations within a family are cordial. Joking relations exist between sister-in-law (younger), brother-in-law (younger) and elder sister's husband and between grand parents and grand children. Avoidance relation exists between father-in-law and daughter-in-law. All the sons get an equal share in ancestral property. Daughters do not inherit parental property. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family.

The Ghantia women enjoy a low status in comparison to men. The women also earn and thus contribute to the family's income. They participate in all social functions, rituals and religious activities alongwith their men folk. Besides, women also carry out domestic activities, like cooking, child rearing etc. Participation of women in politics is absent. Family expenditure is controlled and managed by the men.

The delivery takes place at their home with the help of a *suiani* (mid-wife) of the community. In case of complication, the pregnant women is taken to the nearest local hospital. The Ghantia observe birth pollution for forty days. On the sixth day of birth *chatti* (naming ceremony) is performed in which *fui* selects a name for the child. They invite relatives and friends for a feast on the occasion. Tonsure is performed at the age of one to one-and-a-half year for both male and female children.

Sagai (engagement) is performed at an early age. Marriage negotiations are carried out by maternal uncles of a prospective couple. Groom's father applies turmeric paste on the right palm and makes an impression on the back of the palm thus indicating confirmation of the engagement. Bride price is paid in cash. Marriage ceremony is performed at bride's house. In every corner of the *mandap* (marriage booth) four earthen vessels full of water are kept. Marriage ceremony is performed under the *mandap* and

circumambulation (*fera*) is done around the *mandap*. A feast is arranged. Once marriage negotiations are finalized, the bride puts on the symbols of a married woman. The marriage is performed during night.

Among the Ghantias, the dead are cremated. In case of death of an infant the body is buried. After death the corpse is given a ritual bath and is wrapped in new cloths. The dead body is laid on a bamboo bier with the head of the corpse placed towards the south. In the funeral procession, women are not allowed to accompany men. The eldest son puts fire to the right great toe of the deceased and then to the pyre. In case of a childless person or un-married brothers, the brother's son performs the role of chief mourner. The ashes and bones are collected soon after are immersed in the nearest river or stream. Some take it to Somnath or Gupt Prayag for immersion. They observe death pollution for eleven days. After pollution period is over they eat sweets before the main meal. On the twelfth day, *barma* ritual is performed.

Traditional occupation of the Ghandia community was making and cutting stone grinding wheels. Most of Ghantias are landless. They have now left their traditional occupation due to the advent of modern grinding mills. They have diversified into other professions like daily wage labour, petty jobs, such as pressure stove repairing, cycle repairing etc. Women of the community also work as daily wage labourers.

An informal council of elders, known as the *panch*, settles the disputes arising between members of the community. They resolve cases related to divorce, adultery etc. The *panch* imposes fine on the guilty person in cash or kind. The statutory panchayat looks after the implementation of developmental programmes. Statutory panchayat sometimes also settles the disputes of inter-community nature.

The Ghandia are Hindu and they follow the norms and practices of Hindu religion. Every day they worship Shiva, Krishna etc. At the Dushera festival, they worship their *atak* deities through *Kulguru*. Festivals observed are Diwali, Holi, Janamastmi, Navratri etc. They go to the temples of Shiva, Ram, Krishna. Besides, they join in the local fairs of regional deities, like as *Nishantak Mahadeva Mela*, *Gopinath Mela*, *Takteshwar Mela*, *Shivratri Mela* of Junagadh.

The Ghandia have a tradition of folk songs. Special Songs are

sung by the women on the occasion of marriage. Some devotional songs are sung by both men and women.

The Ghantia have traditional linkages with other communities at their occupational level. Economic sphere of Ghantia community mainly depend upon daily labour. They are economically linked to higher groups like Brahman, Bania, Luhar from whom they receive specialized services. Inter-community marital relations is not practised. They accept cooked, un-cooked food and water from the above mentioned communities. But economically and socially upper advanced communities do not accept water from Ghantias. There are some neighbouring communities i.e. Odd, Bansphodia, Ganchi, Mir-Barot, Muslim etc who join and participate in their ceremonies. The Ghantias do not accept even water from Ghanchi, Chamar, Bhanghi etc.

The Ghantia availed of indigenous medicare. Their attitude towards family planning is not favourable. Primary health centre is situated in their locality in urban area. Private doctors are also available in their area. Due to lack of education, they are not able to get any permanent jobs. They do not avail of the benefits of schemes such as IRDP. Communication facilities has not reached their localities. The fuel resources are firewood and kerosene oil. Nutrition programme through primary schools are availed of by those children, who attend schools.

Biplab Das

GIHARA

The Gihara have migrated from Madhya Pradesh around forty years ago. They are also known as *kanmalia* because of their occupation of cleaning ears. The Gihara, are mainly distributed in Ahmedabad and Surat districts. They communicate in Gujarati with outsiders and in Hindi among themselves. Both Gujarati and devnagari scripts are used.

The Gihara are non-vegetarian in food habits. Wheat and rice are their staple cereals alongwith pulses such as gram, *tur*, *masur* etc. Ground nut oil is used as medium of cooking. They consume a variety of vegetables and tubers and their men take alcoholic drinks occasionally which they procure from the market. Both males and females smoke *bidi* (country made cigarette). Consumption of fruits is occasional.

Among the Giharas, there are seven exogamous *gotras* viz. Soda, Sankad, Goher, Vahesi, Maila, Uttwar and Luiya, which they suffix to their name as surname. The members of all these clans enjoy equal status maintain exogamy in marriage alliances. They perceive themselves as enjoying low status in the local social hierarchy.

The Giharas maintain community endogamy with clan exogamy. They practise adult marriage. Marriage takes place mostly through negotiation. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. Levirate (junior) and sororate (junior) marriages are allowed. Applying *kanku* (red ochre) mark on forehead is the symbol of married status for woman. Bride price is given in cash at the time of marriage. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce is permissible on grounds of adultery or mal-adjustment. Either party can seek divorce. Children are the liability of the father in divorce cases. Remarriage for widow, widower, and divorcee is allowed. Widow marriage takes place with brief ritual.

Nuclear type of families are preponderant. Inter-personal and inter-family linkages are cordial. Joking relationship exists between a woman and the younger brother of her husband and between

grand parents and grand children. Avoidance relations are maintained between daughter-in-law and father-in-law, sister-in-law (Yr Br Wi) and elder brother-in-law (Hu el Br). Conflict and confrontation sometimes take place over property division or due to competition in profession. Rules of inheritance follow male equigeniture. The eldest son succeeds to authority in the family. A female can inherit property only when there is no male issue in the family. The number of nuclear families are going up.

Their women enjoy low status compared to that of men, though they play an active role in economic activity, collection of fuel, bringing potable water etc. But women do not have decision making powers. They take part in the social as well as religious functions, but they do not have any role in political sphere and in the mechanisms of social control.

During the seventh month of first pregnancy, the expectant mother undergoes a ceremony *khol-bharo* (lap filling). A pregnant woman is not allowed to do hard work. She mostly stays within the house in an advanced stage of pregnancy. The delivery mostly takes place in the inner corner of the house, conducted by a midwife. The *orr* (placenta) is buried in the back of the house. They observe pollution period for a period of five weeks after delivery. On the sixth day after birth *chhatti puja* is performed on which occasion both mother and child bathe. *Patasa* (a sweet meat preparation from jaggery or sugar) is distributed among the children. The child is named on this day. *Mundan* (tonsure) ceremony is observed in case of male children only.

If parents on both sides agree about the alliance they fix a date for the *sadi* (marriage). *Pithi* ceremony i.e. the anointing both bride and bridegroom at their respective houses with turmeric paste takes place three days before marriage. This is done by relatives of the bridal couple. The marriage takes place at the bride's place. Sometimes a *mandavo* (marriage booth) is also erected in an open space. A Brahman priest officiates the marriage ceremony. A feast is given to the guests. On the day of marriage the *gotra* (clan) deity is worshipped. On the morning of next day the marriage party is given a ceremonial send off; this is known as *bidai*. Some ornaments and essential cooking utensils are given to the bride as marriage gifts. In a few cases, the marriage takes place without any priest. An elderly person supervises the marriage

rituals. These days, marriage feast is hosted only for close relatives instead of the entire community as was done in the past.

They cremate the dead. Close relatives and neighbours carry the body to the cremation ground. They observe pollution for thirteen days after death. *Shradh* ceremony takes place on the tenth day after death on the occasion of which a feast is given to neighbours and relatives. A person dying of small-pox or snake bite or person dying before adolescence or marriage are buried. No rites are performed in such cases.

A good number of people earn their livelihood by cleaning the ears of their clients. Some of them are also engaged in ceremonial drum beating and rope making. They purchase the jute thread from the market and prepare ropes which are sold. Women and children are largely engaged in rope-making. Some of them are also engaged in casual labour. Their modes of transaction is always in cash. All of them are landless. They are living largely in temporary huts within the municipal area. They have direct link with the market to procure their daily requirements. Child and female labour also exist in their society.

The Giharas do not have any organised traditional council of their own. A *Mukhia* (headman) helps settle problems of a socio-economic nature. In case of deviance from accepted social norms of the community, the offender is fined in cash. They never go to a statutory panchayat or court. Adultery, rape, elopement and theft are considered as crimes or offences.

The Giharas are Hindu who worship *Rama*, *Krishna*, *Shiva*, *Lakshmi* of the wider Hindu pantheon beside the local deities. Each clan member also worships the individual clan deities. They also celebrate Hindu festivals of Holi, Rakshabandan, Dusshera etc. When it is convenient for them they visit local pilgrimage spots like Ambaji, Shyamalaji. They also believe in ghosts and spirits. They arrange for the recitation of *Satyanarayana katha* inviting a local priest for the purpose. They take the services of local Brahman in life-cycle rituals.

The Giharas accept both cooked and uncooked food from almost all the communities though not from scheduled castes such as Bhangis and Chamars. They share water sources and other public utilities.

Formal education for boys and girls is not much favoured by

them. Their attitude towards modern medicare is favourable and they avail of its benefits. Attitude towards family welfare programme is positive. Drinking water is available in their locality. They listen to radio and visit the cinema occasionally. Facilities of road, railway, post office exist in their locality. Fire-wood and cow-dung-cakes are used as fuel. Kerosene oil is used for lighting their houses. All of them do not possess ration card because of their nomadic life.

Jyotirmoy Chakraborty

GIRNARA BRAHMAN

The Girnara Brahmans derive their name from the place, 'Girinagar' (i.e. now Junagadh) where they lived before the arrival of the Audichya Brahman. Another interpretation of the name 'Girnara' is that owing to living on the foothills of Girnar mountain which is considered holy by Hindus and Jains alike, they are called Girnara Brahmans. According to *Prabhaskhand* they came originally from the foothills of the Himalayas and banks of river Ganga. Rajgaur (1987) also states that the Girnara Brahman came here before the Audichya and Modh Brahmans. The Girnara Brahmans are distributed in Junagadh, Jamnagar and Kutch districts. They communicate in Gujarati among themselves as well as with outsiders. They are also quite familiar with Hindi. They use Gujarati and devanagari script.

The Girnara Brahman are purely vegetarian. Wheat rice, and *jowar* are the staple food grains for them. Rice is taken in small quantity. Millet (*bajra*) is consumed occasionally. Pulses such as tur, moong, *urad* and gram are consumed. They use groundnut oil for cooking. Vegetables and fruits make a substantial part of their diet. They take milk and milk products, but abstain from alcoholic drinks. Tea is a popular beverage. They smoke *biri* and cigarettes and chew betel leaves. *Bhajiya* and sweets are prepared on festive occasions.

There are five subgroups among them viz. Madhavapura, Chorwadia, Ajakia, Panai, Bardai. These subgroups have taken the name of the villages where they had first settled. The Madhavapura and Chorwad villages are situated near Junagadh and Ajakia near Porbandar. Panai are Suryavanshi and they live in Kutch. Another subgroup is Bardai. The Bardai live in the foothills of Barda in the Samundra -Kantha area. All groups are equal in social status. There are thirteen *gotras*, viz. Bharadwaj, Kashyap, Kauchchhas, Kaurvas, Maundas, Saudamas, Kaushas, Krishnatri, Sandilya, Vachchhas (Vats), Bhaginas, Vashisth and Gargya. The Bardai are divided into Krishnatri, Kaundilya, Garg, Kaushik, Bhardwaj,

Gautam, Kashyap, Maryanchi Marichi and Mudgal gotras. These *gotras* are exogamous in nature.

The Girnara Brahmans follow monogamous form of marriage. Age at marriage for the girls ranges from 18 to 25 years and for boys from 20 to 28 years. Marriages are settled through negotiation. *Chandlo* or a mark on the forehead is the symbol of married women. Dowry is given in kind. Rules of residence after marriage is patrilocal. Divorce and remarriages are allowed in the community. Divorce can be resorted to by either party. The system of cross-cousin marriage with mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter, is also allowed. After engagement, a girl starts knitting a sweater for her husband which she completes before the marriage.

Families are mostly of the extended type. Joking relationship exists between a woman and the younger brother of her husband, a man and the younger brothers and sisters of his wife and between grandparents and grand children. Obligatory acts are performed by the maternal uncle and paternal aunt in different rites-de-passage. Rules of property inheritance is based on male equigeniture. The eldest son succeeds the father. Inter-family linkages are strengthened by participation in rituals, festivals and ceremonies.

The Girnara women are subordinate to males in their social status. They are restricted to participate in the Panchayat meetings. They do not inherit parental property. They participate in social, ritual and religious activities of the community. Some women are working in white collar jobs and contribute to the family income. They manage the household and also take active part in the decision making process of the family.

Srimant is performed during the seventh month of the first pregnancy. The expectant mother is presented a set of new clothes by her parents and a married woman who has sons offers her a coconut. The first delivery takes place in her parent's house. After the birth of a child, *chhatti* is celebrated on the sixth day. Deliveries now take place in maternity homes. They distribute jaggery or sweets on the birth of a male child. The house is cleaned. At night, a plain paper, red ink, a pen, an earthen lamp and a book are kept on a low stool. It is hoped that *vidhata* (God of fortune) will write out the fate of the new-born in golden letters. The mother of the child takes a first purificatory bath on the eleventh day, second on

the twelfth day and finally on the fortyfifth day. Naming of the child is done on the twelfth day and the child is put in a cradle. *Mundan* (tonsure) is performed for male children in the temple of the clan-deity in the first, third or fifth year of the child. *Janeu sanskar* (initiation-rite) is performed in the seventh year after birth for sons.

Once the negotiation is finalised exchange of gift starts between the parties. Later on, dates for the marriage are fixed. Marriage is solemnised in the bride's house. A Brahman priest conducts the rituals. Ganesh Poojan, *mandap-muhurt*, *grih-shanti* and *hast-milap* are held in that sequence. A thread is put by the Brahman priest (*gor*) on the necks of the bride and the groom. After this *saptapadi* takes place. They make four circumambulations of the sacrificial fire. A feast is arranged. The groom then returns to his house with the bride where consummation of marriage takes place. The maternal uncle gives customary gift (*mosalu*) at the time of *grih-shanti*.

In case of death of minors they bury the corpse. Other wise they practise cremation. Pollution is observed for twelve days. The unburnt bones and ashes of the dead are disposed off in Damodar kund or Hardwar. Rituals are performed on the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth day. *Shradh* is performed on the thirteenth day and a feast is arranged on this occasion. Fifty-two Brahmans are fed. *Uthawani* is done on third and ninth day. The widow gives up her symbols of marriage and wears white dress. Corpse of a married woman is covered with a *panetar* saree white before it is taken for cremation.

The Girinara Brahman have got agricultural land and they do farming. They also perform priestly work, some are *kirtankars* and some are temple-priests. The Joshis are astrologers and are experts in casting horoscopes. The Girnara Brahmans are in white collar jobs.

Samast Brahman Samaj is the biggest organisation of the Girnara community at the regional level. It holds elections every year. Selection of the members is done by a voice-vote. Samast Brahmab Samaj comprises of twenty two *mandals* (circles) in Junagadh district. It has got a big hall made available for celebrating marriages and other social functions. They arrange *samuh lagna* (community marriage), initiation rites (*janeu*) on a mass scale for the community members to minimize expenditure. It also do other welfare works and initiate reforms. Elders of the community resolves the disputes.

statutory village panchayat executes development programmes.

The Girnara Brahmans are Hindu of the Vaishnavia order and belong to the Vallabhacharya Sampraday. Their main deity is *Radha Damodarji*. The main temple is about six Kms. from Junagadh on the Girnar mountain road. The Bardai act as Kirtankars. Ashapura Mata, Kamlai Mata, Bhawani Ma, Jambura Bapa, Amba Mata, etc. They also worship other gods and goddesses of the wider Hindu pantheon. They visit Girnarji, Damodarji, Jatashankar, Dwarka, Amleshwar, Somnath and other Hindu pilgrim centres. They celebrate the festivals of Holi, Dhuleti, Sheetala Satam, Navratra, Dussehra, Diwali, Krishna Janamastami, Ramnavami, Rakhi, Makar Sankranti etc. They attend the Shivratri, fair at Girnar.

The Girnara Brahman are lovers of *haveli* sangeet and are expert in classical music. They have oral traditions and they sing devotional songs and dance *dandiya ras* during festivals.

The Girnara Brahmans have linkages with *Valand* (barber), potter, *Gor* (Brahman priest) and other service castes. They exchange water and food with other Brahmans. Inter-community marriages have also taken place with other Brahman groups. They share the facilities of drinking water wells and crematorium with other high castes. They show little interest in politics. Landlord-tenant, cultivator-labourer, patron-client and employer-worker relationships exist.

Their attitude towards education is quite encouraging. They send their children to schools and also for higher education and professional training. They avail of modern health and medical care. They are aware of the family welfare programmes. They make full use of media and communication. Their houses have electric connection. They use coal, wood, cow-dung cakes, kerosene and LPG as fuels. They avail of the facilities of public distribution system (ration) and banks.

L.N. Soni

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GODHA

The Godha are also known as Gondha and Gonda. They migrated to Gujarat from Madhya Pradesh and claim that they are Gonds. They are mainly distributed in Surat and Valsad districts. They speak in Gujarati and use Gujarati script.

They are non-vegetarian in food habits. They take fish, chicken, mutton. Their staple food consists of jowar (spiked millet), wheat and rice. They take pulses like gram, *tur*, *masur* etc. Groundnut oil is used as medium of cooking. They consume a variety of vegetables, roots and tubers which are locally available. Their men take alcoholic drinks occasionally. Tea is taken by them regularly. Occasionally they also take butter milk.

All of them use Dengar as their surname. They are not aware of the Hindu *varna* system. They perceive a low social status for themselves in the local hierarchy.

The Godhas practise community endogamy. Junior sororate marriage is allowed. Now mostly adult marriages take place. The modes of acquiring mates is through negotiation and also by mutual consent. Monogamy is the common form of marriage. Applying of *kanku* or (vermillion) on the fore-head and *kari-ganthi* are the symbols of marriage for a woman. The system of bride-price is prevalent. *Chuta chhera* (divorce) can be sought by either party and is permissible on reasonable grounds. Children become the liability of father in divorce cases. Remarriage of a widow, widower male and female divorcees are permissible.

The Godhas live mostly in nuclear type of families. Some mixed extended families also co-exist. Inter-personal and inter-family relations are cordial. Joking relations exist between a woman and the younger brother of her husband and between grand parents and grand children. Avoidance relationship exists between daughter-in-law and father-in-law and between a woman and the elder brother of her husband. All male children inherit their ancestral property and share equally. A daughter can inherit

property if there is no male issue. The eldest son succeeds as the head of the family after the death of his father.

The Godha women participate in all social, ritual and religious activities along with their men folk. They play an active role in agricultural operations, animal husbandry and other economic activities. Women control family expenditure but they do not have any role in the mechanism of social control or in the political sphere.

During the seventh month of the first pregnancy, the expectant mother undergoes a ceremony, called *kholo-Varo*. Delivery generally takes place in the inner corner of the house itself. A *suyani* (midwife) attends during the delivery. They observe pollution for a period of five days. On the sixth day after birth both mother and the child undergo a purificatory bath and wear new clothes. The *kul-devi* is worshipped on this day. The child is also named on this day by the father's sister. The ceremony is called *chhatti*. On twenty first day after birth of a male child *babri mundan* (tonsure) takes place.

Three to five days before marriage, *pithi* ceremony is observed in both the house of the bride and the bride groom. The bride and the groom are anointed with a paste of turmeric in their respective elder maternal aunts, and their brother's wives. The women sing folk songs pertaining to marriage. The marriage takes place at the bride's place. A *Mandavo* (marriage booth) is erected in front of the bride's house. In the afternoon the groom goes to bride's place in a procession, called *jan*. The marriage ceremony is conducted by Brahman. The guests are entertained to a feast. On the day of marriage the clan deity, Kan-Ban and Man-Bai are worshipped. The mother in law of the bride ties the *kariogathi* (wedding necklace) around the neck of the bride. The groom returns to his house with the bride. Consummation of marriage takes place there. In case of remarriage of a widow only brief rituals are performed.

In the case of death of a minor or who die due to snakebite or smallpox the Godhas simply bury the body. Otherwise they practise cremation. Close relatives and neighbours carry the dead body to the nearest cremation ground. The eldest son acts as the chief mourner who puts fire to the pyre. Ashes and unburnt bones are immersed in the river water. The period of pollution observed is for thirteen days. On tenth day after death *sradh* ceremony takes

place in the house of the deceased. They take purificatory bath. All relatives and neighbours assemble for the funeral feast. They observe annual *shradh* or *varsi* ceremony.

They are mainly a landless community. Their primary occupation is weaving blankets. Now they have taken to a variety of occupations like tailoring, diamond cutting, agriculture and other allied services. They buy wool from the Bharwad with which they weave blankets. Their women are mostly engaged in blanket weaving. They have direct link with the market for procuring their daily requirements. The system of child labour exist in their society. In semi-urban areas, they are now engaged in diamond-cutting.

The Godhas have a traditional caste council. It settles the disputes between the members and punish the offenders like rape, elopement, adultery etc. A Godha is a member of the executive committee of the Panchayat. The role of statutory panchayat is to plan and implement welfare and development activities.

The community professes Hinduism. They worship Shankar Bhagwan, Kalamata, Rama, Krishna of the wider Hindu pantheon besides the other deities like Ambamata, Khadimata etc. They have their own *kul devi* or (clan goddess) like Kan-bai and Man-bai. In every settlement there is a priest who looks after these deities. At the time of marriage and on other ceremonial occasions the *kul devi* is propitiated. They also celebrate Hindu festivals like Holi, Diwali, and Navratra. They also observe *Diwasa* at the end of the rainy season. They take the services of a priest, who are mostly Pandiya Brahmans in life cycle rituals. They pay a visit to local pilgrimage spots like Ambaji, and Unai. They believe in ghosts and spirits.

Their women sing folk-songs. The community has its own oral tradition and folk tales.

The Godha accept both cooked and uncooked food from almost all the castes except the Chamars. They maintain patron-client, cultivator-labour relationships with Bharwad and Dhodias. They share well and other water resources with neighbouring communities. They avail of the services of barber, cobbler, potter (Kumbhar) and other communities at the village level.

Those living in urban areas have developed a positive attitude towards education. Their attitude towards both traditional as well as modern medicare is favourable and they avail of both. Attitude is favourable towards family planning though and a number of

couples still prefer to have three to four children in the family. They use modern methods of birth control though they do not display any special preference for sterilization. Drinking water is available within the locality through handpumps. A good number of them are associated with weaving as a form of self employment. They listen to radio and visit the cinema occasionally. Road, railway and post-office exist within their easy reach. They use electricity. Fire-wood and cow-dung cakes are used as fuel resources. Their children avail of the facilities of mid-day-meal scheme in the schools. Ration distributed through fair-price shops is available to them. Their attitude towards savings is favourable.

Jyotirmoy Chakraborty

GOLLALARE

The Gollalare are originally hailing from Jhansi district of Uttar Pradesh, has now settled in Ahmedabad and other towns of Gujarat in search of better economic opportunities. They speak in Bundel-Khandi within the kin group and communicate in Gujarati with outsiders. They use the Devanagri as well as Gujarati scripts.

The Gollalare are strictly vegetarian and do not consume roots and tubers. Wheat is the common cereal and *tur* is the pulse, commonly consumed. Rice, other pulses such as *mung*, and *urad* also form part of the diet. Ground nut oil is used as the cooking medium. Vegetables, milk and milk products figure in their daily menu. Tea is a popular beverage. For pregnant woman and lactating mothers they prepare special foods. During festivals also they prepare special dishes.

The community have a number of exogamous gotras. Of these, Panchartan, Famis, Vaid, Bhandari, Belegua, Nai are commonly found. These regulate marriages. Besides, within the Gotra there are people known as the *basraj* (linage) group, who are descendents of known ancestors and have specific role to play in life cycle rituals and in crisis situations. The *basraj* group also plays significant role in property inheritance and succession in the case of individuals who die without leaving any issue. In case of adoption also, a person prefers to adopt his brother's son or individual from the *basraj* Group. The Gollalare enjoy social status that goes with an uppercaste in the area. They are one of the constituents of Vania cluster.

Group endogamy and *gotra* exogamy are strictly observed. They also exclude the members of the *gotra* of the mother's brother while selecting a match. The months after Diwali and the summer months are the peak marriage season when marriages are celebrated. During *chaturmas* (four sacred rainy months) marriages are not solemnised. Marriages are now celebrated during day. Previously it used to takes place at night. Adult marriages are the norm, with girls marrying between the ages of eighteen and twenty

and males between twenty two to twenty five. Males sometimes marry late as first they prefer to settle down in their business. Marriages are settled through negotiations which take a lot of time. Because they are settled away from their original habitat and are dispersed over a wide area. They have constant contact with their kin at Jhansi.

The Gollalare have monogamous marriage and follow patrilocal rules of residence after marriage, Dowry is paid in cash and kind, ornaments and in the form of household articles. Toe ring and vermillion in the hair parting indicate married status for women. Divorce is not permitted. Once a girl gets married and enters the house of her husband, it is believed she leaves that house only in the instance of her death. A widow can not remarry though a widower can do so.

Extended families are common, closely followed by nuclear type of family. The old and the disabled are secure in extended families. Sons inherit ancestral property and get an equal share. Daughters have no right over it. A person having no sons give his property to his daughter or adopts his brother's son as legal heir. The eldest son succeeds the father. The members of a family have relations based with affection, co-operation, obligation and mutual trust. A married woman has avoidance relations with his husband's father and also elder brother as well as such other kins. She keeps veil and avoids straight conversation. She shares jokes with her husband's younger brother and sister. A man has joking relation with his wife's younger sister but avoids wife's elder sister and mother. Grand parent and grand children have affectionate as well as joking relations. Inter-family linkages are traditionally kin based. But now it has become extended to members of the community scattered over wide areas including foreign lands. This relationship is further extended to other Digambari groups hailing from Bundelkhand and Madhya Pradesh who have settled in Gujarat.

The Gollalare women have no right to inherit property. They play a significant role in family management and influence family decisions, though the final say rests with the man. The head of a house-hold is always a male. Women are not deprived of their due role in decision making. They help their husband in their trade but strictly within the limits of four walls. They rarely go out for

earning. At the ritual level women play a dominante role. They observe fasts (*vratas*) on various occasions and make offerings. At the social level they have a limited role to play.

Birth of a child brings happiness to any Gollalare family. Actually the joy and enthusiasm begin with the confirmation of pregnancy. Restrictions are put on the movement of an expectant mother. A protective thread is tied around the waist. *Kholabharana* ceremony (filling up the lap) is performed in the seventh or ninth month of pregnancy as per convenience. The father of the pregnant woman brings a new set of clothes and a coconut which are placed in her lap which is then followed by a feast attended by the kin. Special dishes are prepared on this occasion particularly those fancied by the pregnant woman. Delivery generally takes place at the house of her husband but if it is more convenient at her parent's home, then the confinement may take place there. Doctors are consulted at regular intervals. Just before birth, the woman is confined to a separate room, or admitted to a hospital. The birth of a boy is announced by beating a metal plate. Midwife and elderly ladies in the house give bathu the baby and mother with warm water. The Brahman *pandit* is consulted and asked to prepare the horoscope. *Chhathi* is performed on the sixth day when the naming ceremony performed. A midwife attends the mother and child upto *chhathi*. The mother and the baby are not taken out of the room till this day. Pollution period is observed for ten days during which members of the family can not make offerings in the temple. On the tenth day, the house is washed and the mother and the baby bathe. Offerings are made in the temple. But the mother can enter the kitchen and do cooking only after she takes the purificatory bath on the forty fifth day, after birth. However, she takes rest for three to four months doing only light work and attending the new born. *Mundan* (tonsure) is not essential if however a vow is made, then it takes place usually at a temple or a pilgrim centre.

Once marriage negotiations are finalised the date of betrothal (*tika*) is fixed by the Brahman. On the auspicious day, the father of the bride and close kin go to the home of the prospective groom and perform *tika* in which gifts are given in the form of cash and ornaments. A feast is organised for their Kin at the boy's house. Then marriage programme (*legan*) comes from the girl's house in

which the schedule of various rituals are given. Accordingly three days prior to marriage *pithi* or *ubatan* is performed. Five married women apply the prospective couple with oil and turmeric-paste in their respective homes. The convenience of a expecting mother or that of the sick in the house are taken into consideration while fixing the schedule for various rituals. On the day of marriage in the morning the groom takes bath and attires himself in the ceremonial dress. Those who are to accompany him in the marriage procession (*barat*) also get ready. The groom seeks blessings at the temple and from his mother and other elders of the family. After this the procession starts with the groom on a horse or a palanquin, and these days in a car. The groom and *baratis* (members of marriage party) are welcomed at the girl's house. Before entering it he performs *toran* i.e. he touches the upper beam of the door with a stick. It is followed by *varmala* i.e. the exchange of garland by the bride and the bridegroom. The groom is then taken to the *mandap* (marriage-pavillion). *Kanyadan* (which signifies giving away the daughter in marriage) is done by the bride's father followed by *hastamilap* (joining of hands of bride and bridegroom) and finally the couple circumambulate the holy fire seven times. During first six rounds the bride leads. After the completion of six rounds the couple take some vows after which they complete the final and seventh round with the groom in the lead. A feast for all the kin and guests follows. Thereafter *pelankcher* ceremony is observed. The groom ceremonially demolishes the *mandap*. The newly wed couple and groom depart the same evening. Marriage songs are sung all through the period. The couple is welcomed by the mother of the groom at his residence. That night they sleep separately. Ladies sing songs during the whole night. Next day there is a feast attended by kin and friends. The bride goes to the temple and after coming back puts her hand marks before the beginning of conjugal life. Next day the bride and the groom untie the thread tied on their wrist on the occasion of *pithi* ceremony. Consummation of the marriage takes place a few days later. The bride then returns to her parent's house, stays there for a couple of days, and finally goes to her husband's home.

The Gollalare cremate their dead except in case of infants whose bodies are buried. Once death occurs the lamentation draws the attention of the kin (*kutumb* or *basraj*) who rush to the house and

relay news to relatives scattered in different areas. The body is bathed and covered with a new cloth and placed on a bamboo bier. The eldest son acts as the chief mourner. Sons carry the body helped by other kin. A flame is carried from the house to the cremation ground. The corpse is taken out with its leg towards the door. The eldest son lights the pyre. All the mourners bathe and return to the house of the deceased from where they disperse. Only male members go to the cremation ground. No cooking is done in the house of the deceased; the food for the family being supplied by families of the *basraj* and other kin. On the third day the ashes are collected and immersed in the river Sabarmati. Pollution is observed for twelve days on the completion of which a purificatory bath is taken and the house is thoroughly washed. Obsequial oblations are performed for the departed soul. The family members take final purificatory bath. Marriages even if fixed are postponed in the case of a death in the family. *Shantipath* is done in the temple on the thirteenth day. Offerings are made for the first time and a feast is organised for kin and friends. In the evening of the same day the *pagdi* (succession rites) ceremony is performed. *Pagdi* is first wrapped by the mother's brother followed by other kin. This is done for the chief mourner only and with this the ritual concludes. After a year *dan* (alms) is given to the poor.

Traditionally they are traders and they are still in business and well acquainted with the modern market system. Now they have also taken to white collar jobs. However, they are not industrialists by any means. Their kinship relations play a positive role in business. For it creates a network from which they derive in various ways. A fresh migrant of the community gets help from well settled members of the community.

The Gollalare belong to Digamber sect and profess Jainism. The Jain centres of pilgrimage are sacred to them. Pawapuri, Mahavirji, Palitana, Rishabhdev, Sravana Belgola, Muktaahir are some of their important pilgrimage centres. A Brahman Pandit solemnizes the marriage but these days he is replaced by Jain pandits. He also helps in making offerings in the temple. They patronise saints who give religious discourses from time to time. Dewali, Mahavir Jayanti, Paryusan, Daslakshan, Athai etc. are important festivals observed by them. Also they observe Rakshi,

Akhatij etc. They observe other local Hindu festivals mainly by preparing festival dishes.

The Golalare women sing songs on various occasions. In folklore, arts and craft they share the local tradition with others

Traditionally the Golalare have economic and social linkages with the service castes and also with other castes as they are in business. They enjoy a high caste status equivalent to Hindu Banias. They do not exchange cooked food or water with the scheduled castes. They do not have connubial norms with any other community. They have access to the drinking water, wells, public buildings and institutions. They had *jajmani* relations with the service castes but now it has become totally defunct. In local politics their participation is marginal.

The Golalare have made significant progress in the field of female education. Literacy rate has increased satisfactorily. They are conscious of modern medicare and family welfare programmes. Being in the urban areas they avail of the benefits of public distribution system. They procure essential commodities from fair price shops. Banking facilities are available to them. They seek financial assistance from bank and other financial institutions of the Government. They are also aware of the facilities of savings and investments provided by the government through banks and postal savings etc.

D.K. Samanta

GOLARANA

The Golarana and Rana are synonymous term which are sometimes alternately used. According to them they have descended from the Rajputs of Rajasthan having migrated from there, and settled at present in Gujarat. In tracing their history they mention that they were soldiers of a Rajput ruler. Some others are of the opinion that after the fall of Rajput kingdoms in Rajasthan, less privileged Rajput groups left Rajasthan and adopted alternative occupations such as the husking of paddy with *golachakki* made of stone and hence came to be known as Golarana. Still some others are of the opinion that they trace their origin to the progeny born of Rajput rulers and their attendants. They draw some affinity with Dhankuta community of Rajasthan. The Golarana are distributed in the districts of Panchamahar, Mehsana, Sabarkanta, Banaskanta, and Ahmedabad. They inhabit cities as well as the rural localities of the districts. Their mother-tongue is Gujarati through which they communicate both within the kin group and with others. They use Gujarati script. Some of them understand Hindi.

The Golarana are non-vegetarian in their food habits consuming egg, fish, mutton, but strictly abstain from beef or pork. Their staple food includes cereals like rice and wheat. They take available vegetables. They are addicted to country made liquor but cannot provide milk to their children daily. Fruit is consumed occasionally. They prepare sera (wheat flour, tassar, ginger etc. boiled in milk or water) which is served to pregnant women. Though they are non-vegetarians they have almost given up the habit of taking such food items, due to the influence of other neighbouring communities who are vegetarian.

The Golarana community is an endogamous unit having some exogamous clans. These are Daviya, Solanki, Panch, Sabodia, Palia, Bagmaria etc. They include themselves in the Kshatriya varna. Neighbouring communities do not however accord this status and regard them as belonging to the Vaishya varna.

Monogamy is the form of marriage, but polygyn has also been reported in some sporadic cases. Age of marriage for males and female is 21 years and 18 years respectively. Negotiation is the mode of acquiring mates. Bangles, *sindhur* (vermillion) on the parting of hair and *bindi* on the forehead are the symbols of married woman. They follow patrilocal rule of residence. Bride price is paid in kind. Divorce and remarriage (*natra*) are permitted under the approval of the community panch.

Both nuclear and extended type of families co-exist in their society. The number of nuclear families is more than that of the other type. The relationship between daughter-in-law and father-in-law and between mother-in-law and son-in-law are of avoidance. An individual regards it as obligatory on his part to care for his maternal uncles and widowed paternal aunts in their old age. Regarding inheritance of property they follow male equigeniture rules but succession is through the eldest son. Inter-family linkages are based on community feelings, and fellow sentiments.

Women do not have any right of inheritance in their father's property though they contribute to the family economy as they work as daily wage labour. They collect fuel and look after domestic chores. In spite of this, women are regarded inferior to men. In any decision within the family they hardly play any role, but they participate all in social and religious functions concerning the family. They have a status lower than that of their men.

During the seventh or the ninth month of pregnancy they observe a ceremony called *god bharna* or *srinant*. This function is arranged at the house of the husband of the pregnant woman. In this ceremony a coconut and Rs.1.25 are put in her lap. After this she is taken to her natal home where she stays during childbirth. Birth pollution is observed for forty days by the mother. On the sixth day they worship their *kuldevi* and perform the naming ceremony. The first letter of the name is selected by the Brahmin. Father's sister of the baby selects a name. On the last day of pollution, mother and the new born take purificatory bath. At the age of five the male child undergoes the tonsure or *mundan* ceremony.

The marriage once settled, the *sagai* (betrothal) is performed. *Sagai* is held at an early age. A member of the *panch* acts as a witness. The father of the bride to be fixes up the date of marriage

in consultation with a Brahman. The detailed programme of marriage or *lagan* is sent to the father of the groom. Marriage rituals start with *pithi* and *Ganesh sthapana*. On the day of marriage they worship their *gotra devi* (goddess). They worship also the potter's wheel. On the wedding day, the groom along with relatives and friends arrives at the house of bride in procession which is called *barat*. On the previous day they take out a *varghoda*. The bride and the groom circumambulate the sacrificial fire for seven times. *Hast milap* and *kanyadan* are other main rituals. A feast is arranged. Next day the groom takes his wife to his fathers place where consummation of marriage takes place.

The Golarana cremate their dead. The body is bathed and carried for cremation on a bamboo bier. They tie four coconuts on the four corners of the bier. They offer *pinda* oblations. On the third day they collect the ashes in a small earthen pot and immerse it in a nearby river. They observe death pollution for ten days. On the tenth day they arrange *pinda-dan* ceremony. Community feast is arranged on the twelfth day. On the thirteenth day they present certain belongings of the deceased like a cot, bedding etc. to a Brahman.

Very few of them have cultivable land. Their traditional occupation was of cleaning grain and cereals and husking paddy. Since the setting up of rice mills, they have taken to miscellaneous occupations. They are working in factories or as day labourers. Some of them are in service in govt. and the private sector on monthly payment basis while the women usually engage themselves in cleaning grains and cereals or in selling vegetables. Some of them work as maid servants. They are also in service in Govt. offices. Their market transactions are in cash. Children of 12 to 14 years also go for earning.

At the village level there is a *panch* comprising five to six members. The head of the *panch* is called *Patel* and the post is hereditary in nature. This *panch* or caste council settled the disputes between the members, maintain peace and enforce customary rules. There is an organisation at the district level. The community council keeps records of betrothals and get a minimum of Rs. 5.25 per case. It discourages divorce and remarriage. In some villages they have youth clubs to encourage the education of poor

students in education. Youth club members are elected. The statutory panchayat implements the programmes of government.

The Golarana are Hindu and worship all Hindu gods and goddesses. They worship their kuladevis during their life cycle rituals. A Majority of them are the followers of Kabir. There is a temple of saint Kabir at Lunaward village, where worship takes place on the full Moon day during the month of *Jeth* of the Hindu calendar. They observe Diwali, Dasehra, Holi, Ganesh Chaturthi etc. Garo or Pandya Brahmans are their priest. Local fairs and festivals such as Bara Ambaji Ka Mela, local Shivratri *mela* are also attended by them. They sing folk songs on various occasions.

The Golarana used to husk paddy in the houses of the higher castes. The community does not accept food and water from other communities having a lower social status than them such as Sarania, Bajania, Harijan etc. Likewise higher castes. Brahman, Rajput and even Nai do not accept food and water from them. They share in common with other neighbouring people water resources, crematorium, school, and panchayat ghar. Rawal attends to their marriage rituals. Brahman and Nai assist them in marriage and death rituals. Those who are educated and in service invite their friends of other castes to attend their wedding or birth ceremonies. They actively participate in political activities and public functions at the taluka level. Cultivator-labour relationships are very cordial.

The level of literacy is very low. But now they favour educating their children without maintaining any distinction on sex. Towards modern medical care their attitude is, favourable but not so where family welfare programmes and birth control measures are concerned. They are aware of the different developmental plans of the Govt, such as IRDP, Self Employment etc. and some of them are availing of the benefit of these programmes. They use wood, coal, cow dung as fuel. They are availing benefit out of the nutritional programmes, Public Distribution system of ration etc. Banking facilities are there and some of them make the use of it.

D.K. Nanda

GOLSINGHARE

The Golsinghare originally belonged to Bhind district in Madhya Pradesh. It was in search of economic opportunities that they migrated to several towns of Gujarat and settled in Ahmedabad, Baroda and Surat in fairly large numbers. Ahmedabad with its textile industry and various other trades attracted the traders and businessmen from various parts of the county. Golsinghare are one of those trading groups who came to Ahmedabad for a better prospects. The Golsinghare communicate in Bundelkhandi with their kin group and use the Devnagiri script. They speak in Gujarati to interact with local people or outsiders. They also use Gujarati script.

The Golsinghare are strictly vegetarian in the food habits avoiding even onion and garlic. Wheat is main cereal they take with a scanty amount of rice. Ground nut oil is used as cooking medium. *Tur dal* is the pulse commonly consumed along with *mung*, *urad*, and *chana dal*. Milk and milk products are essential part of their daily diet. Ghee (clarified butter) is used for preparing special items, and tea is the common beverage. They consume seasonal fruits. They have special items for the sick and infants. Also there are special preparation for the expectant and lactating mothers. Festivals are essentially marked by festive food items.

Among the Golsinghare there are twenty seven exogamous gotras though, they themselves could hardly name a few. Sangai, Vihol, Kamaia, Dhanuk, Nan etc. are some of the popular gotras among them for the purpose of regulating marriages. Each gotra has a deity duly propitiated and worshipped by the head of the household. There is a place of gotra goddess in each house. In the local hierarchy they enjoy a status equivalent to that of the high castes or Bania. Actually they are treated as a constituent of the Bania cluster.

During *chaturmas* (four sacred rainy months) marriages are not solemnised. Summer months are the peak marriage season. The community practises endogamy strictly at the community

level and exogamy at the *gotra* level. In selecting a match they take care to exclude the *gotra* members of the mother's brother as well in addition to their own. Marriages are settled through negotiation. Adult marriages are the norm with males marrying at the age of twenty-two or a little later while for females the marriage age ranges from nineteen to twenty one years. In these negotiations a kin acts as a mediator. Besides the consideration of *gotra* the family background, status and economic standing are other important considerations in any matrimonial alliance. Dowry is paid in the form of ornaments and gifts of household articles. Toe ring, glass bangles and vermillion on the hair parting are the symbols of married status for a woman. A widow gives up all these and avoids wearing colored clothes. Divorce is not permitted and it is the belief that a girl leaves her husband's home only at the instance of her death. A widow cannot remarry though for a widower no such restrictions are applicable. However the presence of grown up children from the first wife and age are important considerations in remarriages.

Vertically extended families are common among the Gol-singhare. This is followed by the nuclear type. The sick, disabled and helpless are secure in extended families. However, horizontal extended families are becoming rarer day by day. The inter-personal relations in the family is marked by love, affection, obligation, mutual trust and co-operation. All perform their role effectively to keep the family unit viable and vibrant. A married woman has avoidance relations with her husband's father, elder brother and similar kin. She keeps veil and maintain distance. However she shares a joke with her husband's younger brother and sister. She respects her husband's elder sister. A man avoids his wife's elder sister and mother. He has joking relations with his wife's young brother and sister. Grand parents have affection to grand children. Sons inherit property and get an equal share of it. Daughters have no right in parental property. A person having only daughters adopts the daughter's son who becomes the legal heir. These days however women inherit the parental property when there are no male issue in the family. Succession goes to the eldest son. Interfamily linkages are kin based. *Kutumb* or the patri-kin and affinals maintain linkages. As the members of the community are scattered over wide areas for professional reasons they develop linkages at

the family level with the fellow members of the community. They also develop close relations with neighbours who extend their help in crisis and share good moments. There is a kind of strong fellow feeling for the people in the neighborhood hailing from their home district. The community boundaries are widened to form a regional brother-hood.

The position of women in Golsinghare society is inferior to that of the males. They have no rights to their father's or husband's property though this situation is undergoing a change. Women do not go out to earn. In social and ritual spheres they play a significant role. In family management their views are not ignored. Educated mothers have the added responsibility of looking after the education of their children as the menfolk remain largely preoccupied in their business. House keeping, attending to domestic chores and child rearing are considered the responsibility of women amongst the Golsinghare.

Pre-natal rituals include the performance of *simant* or *god bharna* which is done in the seventh month of pregnancy. It takes place at the husband's house. A coconut, some money and sweets are put in the lap of the pregnant mother. Birth pollution is observed for ten days during which period even marriages fixed earlier are postponed. However if the pre-marriage ritual of *pithi* is to be performed the ceremony takes place as scheduled. On the eleventh day after birth members of the family and kin take a purificatory bath and make offerings in the temple. *Chhathi* is performed on the sixth day after birth when the child is conferred its name by the father's sister. The mid-wife who assisted in delivery continues to serve till this date. For the first time on this day, the mother and the baby come out of confinement. The period of pollution for the mother is forty days. On the last day the mother undergoes a purificatory bath and can begin to cook food. *Mundan* (tonsure) is performed for the male child if a vow to this effect is taken. It is done when the child is at least a year old.

Once marriage negotiations, which is a long drawn-out affair because of the dispersed nature of the community, are concluded it is ritually confirmed by a *tika* (engagement) ceremony. The father of the bride or her elder brother visits the house of the groom and puts *tika* (mark) on his forehead. After this the prospective couple may meet. The marriage cannot be called off at

this stage. This is followed by *lagan*, a schedule of various rituals leading up to the marriage sent by the family of the bride which is treated as a formal wedding invitation and mailed to all the kin. *Pithi* (anointing turmeric paste to the bride and groom) ceremony takes place three days prior to marriage mainly participated in by close female relatives such as the wife of the groom's elder brother and similar kin. The ceremony marks a crucial stage in the rituals leading up to the actual wedding because a marriage cannot be postponed under any circumstance even if there be a death in the family. Widows have no place in these rituals as their presence is regarded inauspicious. Even a widowed mother keeps herself away. The *mandap* (marriage booth) is erected at the girl's house on the morning of the day of marriage. The groom ceremoniously attired seeks the blessings of his mother and other elders, worships deity before setting out in procession to the home of the bride. There they are welcomed by the bride's kin and the groom perform certain rituals with the help of a stick. This is followed by *kanyadan* in the *mandap*. He is led by the bride's mother. *Kanyadan* is performed by the maternal uncle or father of the bride. The couple circumambulate the sacrificial fire for seven times taking the oath of stable conjugal life. The Brahman *pandit* administers the oath to the couple. This takes place in the night hours followed by a sumptuous feast for all with the groom and his family receiving special treatment. The next morning, *bidai* is the main ritual performed. The couple leaves for the house of the groom where they are welcomed by his mother. They offer worship to the *gotra* deity and make five impressions of their palm. This is followed by the consummation of marriage. Next morning the threads tied to the wrists of the bride and the groom are untied by each other and immersed in water.

In case of death they cremate their dead. The body is washed in water and wrapped in a shroud before it is laid on the bier. The eldest son acts as the chief mourner and carries the flame to be used to light the pyre from the house. Sons and kin members carry the bier on their shoulder to the cremation ground. Women do not accompany them. On the third day *kriya* is performed and the ashes are immersed in river water. Pollution period is observed for twelve days, for the first three days of which they abstain from work. During the period of pollution marriages are not performed

and actually all *shubh karma* (auspicious rituals) remain suspended, *Tera* is performed on the thirteenth day. The house is thoroughly cleaned and all would undergo a purificatory bath and offerings and worship is done at the temple. *Shantipath* is performed at the temple on the fourteenth or fifteenth day after death. The funeral feast is arranged on this day attended by patri-kin, affines and other invitees. After a year *shraddha* is performed for the departed soul. Some Brahmans are fed and alms are given to the poor. Ancestor worship is also performed.

Traditionally they are traders though they also do farming in the rural areas. They are land owning farmers. Here they are involved mainly in various trades. Some have taken up white collar jobs recently. Basically they are traders till date and traditionally even if they serve, they used to serve a trader or in a business house. They are rarely in other professions.

At the community level they have a *panch* or caste council, with an *Adhyaksh* which is an elected office. This settles the disputes of a social nature. The community temple is the centre of activities of the community and which is the meeting place for them. The *panch* looks after the management of this temple. Punishment for deviation from the customs and breach of marriage contract by members is imposed in the form of cash fines and social boycott. No such situation has however cropped up calling for imposition of boycott mainly because all attempts are made to mediate and persuade members to retract. Local self government institutions operate to provide civic amenities and is purely development oriented. It hardly acts as an arbitrator in their inter-community affairs.

They are devout Jains and belong to the Digambar sect. They worship deities at the *gotra*, regional and national levels. Jain pilgrimage spots such as Pawagarh, Palitana, Cirnar, Tarenga hill, Mahaviriji, Pawapuri, Sammet Shikhar, Sravana Belagola are sacred centres for them. The Brahman *pandits* acts as a sacred specialist in the performance of certain life cycle rituals providing them with astrological information. They also suggest names for a new born and cast horoscopes. Jain priests also perform rituals, help in making offerings, worship, give religious precepts etc. Diwali, Mahavir Jyanti, Paryusan athai, Rakshabandhan are the common fetivals they observe. There has been neither any change

of faith in the recent past nor has any socio-religious movement been initiated.

The Golsinghare have their oral traditions, and folk songs which are popular in their home land (Bundelkhand area). Songs are sung by the ladies. They play percussion instruments to vocal music.

Traditionally they had linkages with the *kamins* or service castes. In their new habitat also they have socio-economic linkages with local service castes but the payment is in cash. They accept food from Brahman and Vaishnav only and not from the other lower and scheduled castes. They are pretty close to the other Jain groups who have come from that area of Madhya Pradesh and bordering Uttar Pradesh and have made Gujarat their home. At the local level, they participate in political activities. Employer-worker relations operates with in their community and also with others.

In the field of education, they have made significant progress including the field of female education. They are aware of and avail of the benefits of modern medicare systems. They favour family welfare programmes and go for modern measures of birth control. Drinking water facilities and electricity are available to them. Girls start their studies at par with boys but very often drop out due to early marriages or other social reasons, but this trend is showing some signs of decline. The Golsinghare farmers and land owners employ all modern techniques within their reach and also use fertilizers and pesticides. They avail of nutrition programme for children and also benefit of public distribution system. The Golsinghance are familiar with banking facilities and avail of them as far as possible.

D.K. Samanta

GOSAIN

The Gosain are also known as Dasnami, Bawa-Bairagi, Dandi-Swami, Bawaji etc. According to Russel and Hiralal (1916) the name Gosain signifies either "gao- swami" which means master of cows or go-swami which denotes master of senses. The Gosains consider Adi Shankaracharya as the founder of their sect. He had four disciples from whom the ten orders of Gosain are descended. These are viz., Giri (peak or top of a hill), Puri (a town), Parbat (a mountain), Sagar (the ocean), Ban or Van (the forest), Tirtha (a place of pilgrimage), Bharthi (the goddesses of speech), Saraswati (the goddess of learning), Aranya (the forest), Ashram (a hermitage). The Saraswati, Bharti and Puri orders are supposed to be attached to the monastery at Shringeri in Karnataka, Tirtha and Ashram to that at Dwaraka in Gujarat, the Ban and Aranya to the Goverdhan monastery at Puri and the Giri, Parbat and Sagara to the Shrine of Badrinath in Himalayas (Russel & Hiralal, 1916). The Gosains are distributed in different districts of the state. They communicate in Gujarati and use Gujarati script. A few of them also speak in Hindi. The Gosains wear a cloth of *geru* or saffron colour, or red ochre. They wear a *rudraksha mala* (necklace) and *kanthi* around their neck. On their forehead they make three horizontal lines to represent the trident of lord Shiva with sandal wood paste. Those not attached to temples and in white color jobs do not observe these strictly.

The Gosain are purely vegetarian in their food habits. Their principal cereal is wheat. Consumption of green vegetables and pulses is moderate. They consume butter milk and tea, the common beverages. Use of alcoholic drinks is rare. They smoke *bidi* (country made cigarete) and cigarettes. Consumption of fruit is moderate.

Among the Gosains there are five exogamous clans, Kashyap, Vrijula, Ayaykta, Trayesys and Bhurvuba. All the clans hold equal status. Gosains claim that they have the same status as the Brahman in the *Varna* order. But local Brahmans and other high

ranking castes consider them inferior and put them in middle order in the local social hierarchy. They claim that they are part of Lord Sankar Bhagwan and as such have every right to worship the God before anyone else.

Gosains practise community endogamy and clan exogamy in marriage alliances. Cross-cousin marriages are allowed but parallel-cousin marriages are strictly prohibited. Cases of junior levirate and sororate unions are also found. The marriageable age for males being 20-22 years while for the females it is 18-20 years. They practice monogamy. Marriages are settled through negotiation. Though polygyny is permitted in society, it rarely occurs. Divorce or *Chhuta-Chheda* is permitted. Both men and women are allowed to remarry in case of death of any one of the spouses at a young age. The bride price is paid in the form of a fixed amount of Rs. 110/- only. Marriage rituals are being shortened to reduce expenditure, *Samuh lagna* (organizing marriages of several couples simultaneously at a common place) are organized. A newly married couple resides at the groom's house.

Both nuclear and extended type of families are found to exist. Nuclear type of families are increasing in number because of their migration to urban areas. But in the rural areas the extended type of families are still predominant. In a family, the eldest male acts as head of the family. Joking relationship exist between a woman and the younger brother and sisters of her husband while avoidance relationships are maintained between a woman and her husband's elder brother and father. Property is equally shared among the sons only. Eldest son succeeds the father.

The Gosain Women do not have the right over ancestral property. They participate in all social, ritual and religious activities along with their men-folk. A section of the women work as daily wage labourer to supplement family income. Their participation in political activities is almost nil. They enjoy a status lower to that of their men.

The Gosain believe that birth, marriage, initiation and death are the four main stages of human life. During the seventh month of pregnancy of a woman they perform *srimant*. The expectant mother wears new clothes and is offered sweets. The family deity Lord Sankar is worshipped. After this ceremony the expectant mother is generally sent to her parental house where she stays till

her confinement. A mid-wife or a *suvani* conducts the delivery when it takes place at home. These days most of the births are taking place in the nearest health centre or hospital. On the sixth day after delivery *Chhati* ceremony is observed. Both mother and child are given a purificatory bath. The child is named on this day. Neighbours and relatives are given sugar or jaggery. The family deity is also worshipped on this day. The family deity is also worshipped on this day.

Date of marriage is fixed by the parents of bride and the groom. Two to three days before the wedding, the *mandap* (marriage booth) is erected in front of the house. The family deity is also worshiped and both the bride and the bridegroom receive gifts (*masalu*) from their maternal uncle. The marriage takes place at the bride's home. On the arrival of the groom and his party (*jan*) at the bride's house they are received ceremoniously. The party stays at *utara* (halting place). The marriage rites are performed with the help of a Brahman priest. The principle rites practised are *Kanyadan*, *Vivahahoma*, *Panigrahana* and *Saptapadi*. The *jan* (marriage party) and other guests are treated to a feast. Next morning, the bride and the bridegroom return to groom's house. Consummation of marriage takes place there. On the third day the couple untie the *mindhol* (thread) from each other's wrist in front of their family deity.

The Gosains bury their dead. The corpse is bathed and the body is rubbed with ashes, after which it is covered with new clothes. They call it *samadhi*. (in transe) As they are part of Sankar Bhagvan, there is no need of purification by fire. *Shradh* ceremony is performed on the eleventh day. The entire community attends the funeral feast.

Their traditional occupation was the performance of priestly functions in the temples of Shiva and mother goddess. They are mainly a landless community. They are mainly in their traditional calling. Many depend on alms. Some have got employment in the factories. They depend entirely on the local market for their requirements. Most of their children are engaged in various types of daily wage earning to supplement family income.

The Gosain have Dasnani Goswami Pragati Trust for the all round upliftment of the community. The trust consists of eleven executive members, headed by a President, Secretary, Assistant

Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President and six executive members. The office bearers are elected at regular intervals. The Trust mainly settles all social disputes which take place within the community. It also organizes a number of developmental and educational activities.

The Gosains are Hindus belonging to the Shaivite sect. Shankar Bhagwan is their traditional family deity. They believe that they are part of Shankar Bhagawan and they have the first right to worship Shivji or Shankar Bhagawan. Besides priestly functions, some of them also practise astrology (*jyotish-karya*). They celebrate all the Hindu festivals, and particularly the *Asadi Purnima*, the full-moon night of the month of *Asad* (June-July) and *Guru Purnima* with great enthusiasm.

Being residents of urban areas, the Gosains come in contact with the different caste groups. They depend on a Hindu barber for hair dressing. They share facilities of well with other castes of the locality. They are fully dependent on Veraval township for various needs. For shopping and marketing purposes they come in contact with the Banias and Lohanas. Their children go to the public school at Patan. For priestly services they are interrelated with people of lower and middle castes.

The Gosains do not show enough social awareness in respect of education. Though children go to the local primary school, very few reach the level of high school education. Due to living within a municipal area, they enjoy medical facilities extended by the Patan-Veraval Sanjukta Nagar Palika General Hospital. Drinking water is adequately supplied by the Municipality, electricity is also available in the locality. The Gosain children receive mid-day meals in the school under the nutritional programme of the state government. Banking and ration facilities are also within easy reach in their localities. Though numerically the Gosain are a big community distributed throughout Gujarat, nevertheless due to lack of formal education they are not able to share the achievements of the different developmental programmes so far.

Jyotirmoy Chakraborty

GUGGALI BRAHMAN

There are many myths about the etymological derivation of the term Guggali. Enthovan States (1920) that the word Guggali is derived from the word Gokul, related to Lord Krishna. He (1920) further notes that the word is derived from *Gugal* (incense) by which they succeeded in settling at Dwaraka against opposition. But the Guggali Brahmins relate that the word is derived from *Gugal* (sand). Lord Brahma, who presided over Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati, on seeing the bride in all her charm, grew excited and ejaculated sperm which fell on the sand. Lord Shiva took the matter sportingly and created Brahmins out of the sperm that had mixed with the sand. This myth is supposedly mentioned in their *Jati Purana*, or creation myth i.e. *Valkhilya Purana*. The Guggalis are settled mostly in Dwaraka and Bet Dwaraka in the Jam Nagar District. Gujarati is the language of communication and they use Gujarati script. A good number of them speak Hindi as well as English.

The Guggali Brahmins are vegetarians abstaining from garlic and onion. Wheat, *bajra* and rice are the staple cereal foods. All varieties of pulses other than lentils and seasonal vegetables are consumed. Fruit consumption is moderate, milk and milk products are consumed regularly by a majority. Bidi or cigarattee smoking too is found among them on the sly.

Their society is divided into seventeen *gotras*. There is no hierarchy between the different *gotras*. Guggalis belonging to the first *varna* consider themselves superior to all other Brahman groups. Other Brahman groups concede them only equal status and consider them as the followers of Vallabhacharya.

The Guggalis observe community endogamy. *Gotra* exogamy and *Sapinda* exogamy. Polygyny, though permitted is absent. Junior sororate is allowed. Marriageable age for the boys and girls is 21 and 18 years respectively. Marriages are generally arranged by negotiation. Residence is patrilocal. Divorce is not permissible, but in the last five years there were five divorce-

cases, which were secured through low castes. Widow and divorcee remarriage is not allowed.

Families are mainly of the extended type. Avoidance relations exist between the father-in-law, elder brother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Joking relationship between a man and the younger brother of his wife. Inheritance is based on male equigeniture. Succession is in the male line and descent also is reckoned in the male line only. Inter-family linkages are generally forged with members of the community.

The Guggali Brahman women do not have a right to paternal property and they are mostly restricted to the home. Women play a role in ritual matters and religious affairs. They have an equal role in family management and in decision making. They do not have any role to play in the mechanism of social and political control. They enjoy a status lower than that of their men.

Seemanth is observed in the seventh month of the first pregnancy. Relatives of the expectant mother present her clothes and put in her lap a coconut, and sugar. *Randel Mata* is worshipped. *Chhathi* ceremony is arranged on the sixth day after delivery and the baby is named on the tenth day by its father's sister. *Upanayana* (in vertiture of sacred thread) is observed before a boy reaches twelve years of age. A marriage starts with *Ganapathi Sthapan*, *mandap sathapan* and application of *pithi* to the groom and the bride. The binding rituals of marriage are *hast milap* and *mangal phera*. Consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's residence.

After death, the body is bathed and wrapped in new clothes and carried on a single cylindrical log to the cremation gound. On the twelfth day, *Shraddha* (oblation) is performed. It is followed by funeral feast. This marks the end of pullution period.

The traditional occuption of a *Pandya* is restricted to a very small number of the Guggalis. Priestly services are their main occupation. Traditionally Guggalis are linked to different caste groups. *Jajmani* relations as *tirth ghor*. Some of them are employed in the nearby industrial concerns like Mithapur and a few educated persons among them are engaged in various professions. The Guggalis are largely a landless community.

The caste association has the most encompassing influence on Guggali Brahmans. Election to the association is done through

secret ballot and the central committee and the managing committees have representatives from all the *gotras*. This works for to the welfare and development of the community. Generally inter-personal or inter-family disputes are sorted out within the caste association and they are never brought to public knowlege. There is no role for the statutory panchayats in matters related to the community. It looks after the developmental schemes of the government.

The Guggali Brahmans worship Dwarakadhish Ranchodji, as their main deity, besides other deities such as Shiva, Ganesh. They are Vaishnavites by sectoral affiliation. Every *gotra* has a specific *Ganapathi* and *kula devi* who is worshipped on every important occasion. Besides, other Hindu Gods are worshipped and festivals like Janmashtami. Shivratri, Ramnavami and Hutasham (Holi) are observed. Brahmans from the same community officiate as sacred specialists. There are myths, folk-tales and folk-songs that are specific to the community.

The Guggali Bragmans consider themselves as the first among Brahmans, so they have neither commensal no connubial relations with any other group. Modern linkages have however led to the violation of commensal norms to some extent. Different Guggali *tirth-gor* are linked to different caste-groups and individuals through traditional *jajmani* relations, but these relations have been largely diluted particularly in respect of higher castes rather than the lower.

Literacy amongst the Guggalis is universal and the educational levels are very high both in the case of males and females. They prefer modern medicare systems and a good number of them have adopted family welfare programme. Public distribution system and all banking facilities are utilised.

P.B.S.V. Padmanabhan

GUJARATI BRAHMAN

The Gujarati Brahmans have also been referred to as 'Gurjara, Gurjar, Gurjarashtra Brahmans'. They derive their designations from Gurjarashtra, the "country of the Gurjars" (now known by the name of Gujarat). This term came to be applied to Gujarat not because of the great influx of the Scythian tribes called Gujjara, but from the fact that a dynasty belonging to the Gurjara (Gurjaras) was at one time established in a portion of its territories (Wilson 1877).

In the general classification of Brahmans, the Gujarati Brahman are among one of the Panch Dravidas, with the dividing line being the Vindhyan range, though greater part of Gujarat lies to the north of the Vindhyas. Wilson (1877) states, that "an examination of them in detail, however, shows that not a few of their castes belong to the Pancha-Gauda; while some of them have been so long isolated from the other Brahmennical fraternities that they have lost sight altogether of their former connections."

Kinloch Forbes quoting from *Rasmala* (Vol. II) in Wilson states that 'the Brahmans of Gujarat are believed to be sub-divided into more castes than those of any other part of India'. Bhandarkar (1910), further elaborating on Brahmans in *Foreign Elements in Hindu Population* states, that members of some "foreign tribes such as Abhiras, Magas, Gujaras etc. have been absorbed into the Brahman castes. Maga or Bhojak, Nagar, Karhada etc. are of partly foreign origin".

In this connection it is to be remembered that, according to all Hindu law-givers, the degradation caused by the mixture of castes be erased over a certain number of generations, say in the fifth or seventh generation according to Yajnavalkya. Thus, the term "Brahmin" was assigned to a certain class of men who attained a certain social and moral status. In the post-Vedic period the term tended to be restricted to the professionals to whom this function was assigned, whatever their origin.

Gujarat as an independent united dominion existed somewhere

in 942 A.D., with its first ruler as Mulraj. Prior to this Gujarat did not have a separate entity and the area comprised different territorial units viz., Lat Pradesh, Saurashtra and Abu. Mulraj by his strength and valour defeated all these chiefs and became the first king of Gujarat and ruled from 942 to 995 A.D.

There were Brahmans in Gujarat during and even before the regime of Mulraj, but these were from Nagar community, who were worshippers of Lord Shiva known as Hatkeshwar. They reportedly were intelligent, good warriors, physicians, musicians, cooks and had a sound knowledge of Samveda, but they had no knowledge of *yagna kriya* and *kriya kand* (rites and rituals). Thus, the ignorance of the indigenous Brahman population of sacredotal services necessitated Mulraj to invite Brahmans from northern India for rendering the necessary services.

Scholars have drawn various lists of the Brahman communities of Gujarat, differing in their numbers. While Sherring (1872) lists them as 112, Enthoven (1920) as 93, Kavi Dalpatram (1851) as 84, Wilson (1877) as 160 Shah and Desai (1988) give a list of about 80 Brahmin communities. Wilson (1877) states that numerous sections of Brahmins have emerged in Gujarat from their varied occupations, their places of residence, their adherence to custom, departure from custom, quarrels and compromises, defilement, suspensions, excommunication etc. Jackson (1907) further elaborating on the numerous sections of Brahmins in Gujarat states, that most of the names are of geographical nature and have their origin in the political jurisdiction of ancient Hindu Kings.

The Gujarati Brahmans, are an amalgamation of Brahmans from various parts of India, who either came and settled, on their own, or were brought by princely families of the erstwhile states to perform various sacrifices and sacredotal services; or were visiting Brahmans from various parts on pilgrimage to pilgrim centres in Gujarat.

A tentative analysis of the various subgroups of Brahmans appended herewith, on the basis of the available information that could be traced from secondary sources (List 'A') conforms to Jackson's hypothesis. Of the 139 communities listed (List 'A') information on only 113 communities was available (List 'B'). Of these 113 communities 24 communities (List 'C') exist in the Gujarat list, but no information on them was available. These are

reportedly non-existent in Gujarat. In the present day. Nineteen communities (List 'D') are mentioned in List B either a section, surname or a division of bigger communities. The analysis further reveals that 67.14% names are of geographical nature, of which 44.29% are designated after the names of the villages, 22.85% after provincial divisions, 12.85% miscellaneous designation after the name of the communities whom they serve after plants and rivers and split of major groups and 7.14% were such on whom no information on their nomenclature was available.

Further, it would be seen from the list of various scholars, that many of them are common. Three communities are such as are not only synonymous but have been listed separately such as Stithas, Mastana or Mahasthana and Kapila. Eighteen communities, though forming a section of a major group, are listed separately as a community. Some scholars have amplified the list by including the various sections and sub-sections, which Shah (1988) calls as 'order'. These have resulted in the multiplicity of Brahman groups, which does not have much relevance in the present context.

Historians have used various sources including texts in Sanskrit, some of which have stories of Brahmans migrating to their present homes from certain towns in North e.g. Kanauj, Bareilly, to various parts of southern and eastern India. It is possible, that the Gujarati Brahmans may either be migrants from the north or "it is equally plausible that the texts may have been written by upwardly mobile local groups in these places who wished to establish their bonafides as Brahmans (Das, 1977).

Be what it may, the Brahman community is spread throughout the state, with a spill over in the adjoining states. They speak the language and dialect of the area they inhabit, but use Gujarati script for communication with their fellow members and with others in the state, but with outsiders they communicate in the Devnagari script. A few of the educated elite also speak and communicate in Hindi and English.

The community does not have any typical identity marker. Earlier, the males were identified from the rest by the presence of a cue on the occiput and with a sandal or *kanku* (red powder) circle, or two or three horizontal lines on the forehead, which is a typical identity marker of a Shaivite sect- a sect to which many of

them belong. A majority of the people have, however, discarded these traditional symbols of their community, and look like the rest.

Neither the community nor any of its subgroups are included in any of the constitutional categories except for the Garudas, who act as the priest of scheduled castes and are included in the list of scheduled castes of the state. Writing on the bio-anthropological traits of the Gujarati Brahman, Enthoven (1920) writes, "except the fair and regular featured Nagars and Bhargavs, most Gujarati Brahmans, compared with the trading and other high caste Hindus, are somewhat dark, rough featured and strongly made". Besides this, no information is available on their other traits.

The Brahmans are strictly vegetarian even to the exclusion of lentils like *masur*, and garlic and onion. The Anavil section does not observe any taboo regarding *masur*. Their staple cereals are wheat, *bajra*, (millet) and rice. *Jowar* (coarse millet) is also frequently consumed by those residing in the eastern part of Gujarat comprising the districts of Jamnagar, Junagadh, and Kutch, during winter months. Besides, *khitchadi* (a mixture of rice and pulse) is also eaten regularly by these people. *Tuvar* (pigeon pea), *moong* (green gram) and *urad* (black gram) are the pulses commonly used. They consume all the locally available and seasonal vegetables, roots and tubers, throughout the year except during *chaumasa* (four months), when they abstain from vegetables for religious reasons. Fruit consumption is seasonal but milk and milk products are consumed regularly. They use groundnut oil for cooking. They do not take alcohol but are fond of non-alcoholic beverages like tea etc. which are regularly drunk. Chewing of *Pan* (betel leaves) and *supari* (areca nuts) is quite common. Though a majority do not smoke, nevertheless, some do smoke cigarettes and tobacco. Special dishes and sweets are cooked on festive occasions.

One of the most notable features of the caste system of Gujarat is the proliferation of small, endogamous castes within the Brahman community. There is a close association between caste names and the name of a locality. Thus Shrimali Brahmans are those Brahmans who come from a place by the name Shrimal, now called Bhinmal, near Mount Abu in Rajasthan; Modh Brahmans are those who came from Modhera; Nagar Brahmans

come from Vadnagar, and so on. Further sub-division within a caste such as the Nagars are again associated with different localities. Thus the two major subdivisions among the Nagar Brahmans are the Vadnagar Brahmans and Visalnagar Brahmans - the former's place of domicile is supposed to be the town of Vadnagar and the latter's Visalnagar (Das 1977)".

The Brahmans hold that their families have sprung from the seven great *rishis* (originally the principal Vedic poets), the descent lines being designated *gotras*, viz. Bhrigu, Angirasa (embracing the Gotamas and Bhardwaj), Atri, Vishwamitra, Kashyapa, Vashishta and Agastaya. Locally, the word *gotra* is taken to mean the exogamous subdivision of the community. Intermarriage has played a great part in creation of new *gotras* among the Brahmans, and it is generally believed on the authority of Manu that "many new tribes were continually being created by the intercourse of Brahmans with women of other castes (Singh 1894)". It is considered immaterial whether the '*gotra*' name is after one of the ancient sages, or is totemic or territorial in character. It is essentially a patrilocal category, and is often used as a patronymic suffix, which is termed as '*attak*'. Neither the name of the '*gotra*' progenitor, nor the precise period in which he lived is known, nor is it possible for '*gotra*' members to trace definite genealogical links among themselves, it serves little purpose other than the regulation of marriage relations.

Elaborating on the social division, hierarchy and stratification among the Brahman of Gujarat in general, Shah (1988), basing his divisions mainly on Kavi (1851) and Bombay Gazetteer (1901) on a huge number of Brahman section states, that Brahmans constitute the first order/division of caste in Gujarat, which is further divided into two or more second-order divisions. Usually these were distinguished from one another by prohibition of marital alliance, but freedom of food transaction i.e., restriction of *beti vyavahar* ("daughter" i.e. marital transaction) but freedom of *roti vyavahar* ("bread", i.e. food transaction) as is called in the local parlance. For example, the Brahmans were divided into various divisions of the second order, the name of which were based on names of places (region, town or villages). Kavi Dalpatram, lists 84 divisions, which have been called second order division by Prof. Shah. The relationship between most of the Brahman of second order division was marked

by greater emphasis on being different (Pocock's difference, Dumont's 'seperation', Bougle's 'repulsion') and separate than on being higher and lower. This was dramatised at huge feasts called *chorasi* (eighty four) when Brahmans belonging to all the traditional eighty four second order divisions sat together to eat food cooked in the same kitchen. There was also another kind of feast called *bhandaro*, where Brahmans belonging to a lesser number of division (say, all the few in a small town) were invited. However, though the very low Brahmans such as Kayatias and Tapodhans were invited, they were made to sit separately from the rest of the Brahmans. (Shah, 1982).

The second order divisions are further segmented into two or three status categories. These status categories consisted of wealthy and powerful lineages distinguishing themselves by some appellation such as Desai among the Anavil and Baj among the Khedawal etc. For example, the Khedawal Brahmans are divided into Baj and Bhitra, the Nagar Brahmans into Grihastha and Bhikshuk, the Anavils into Desai and Bhatela, the other status divisions being Bisa and Dasa; Mota and Nana.

Most of second order divisions were each further divided into third order division called as *ekdas* (units) or *gol* (circle), and both signified an endogamous unit. These are composed of definite number of families living in certain villages and towns. They were organised from time to time to get relief from the difficulties inherent in hypergamy which was so powerful that each such endogamous unit could not be perfectly endogamous even at the peak of its integration. Each unit was ranked in relation to others and many members of the lower units married their daughters into the higher units resulting in scarcity of brides at the lowest stratum. To cope with such a problem, while among others the Khedavals and Anavils practised 'exchange marriage' and by restricting marriage of sons in a family to younger sons, if not only to the youngest. Thus a high incidence of exchange marriages and of bachelors in the lower stratum among the Anavils was seen (Joshi, 1966; Vander Veen, 1972; Shah, 1979). Frequently, the *ekdas* or *gols* were each divided into endogamous groups called *tads* (split).

The *tad*, thus represented the last order of the Brahman division but this does not mean that every second order division was

necessarily divided into the third or subsequent orders. Thus at one end there were first order divisions, subdivided upto the fourth order, whereas, at the other end there were second order divisions which were not segmented at all for e.g. Nandodara, Udambara and Vayada Brahmans are not at all further subdivided into the fourth sections, whereas, there are some like Sompura who were divided at two levels only, as has been mentioned in a related write up on the community.

Besides the above segmentation, which are more on the basis of differentiation rather than of hierarchy, there is yet another point of differentiation, the rural-urban divide i.e. Brahmans who live in towns and cities and those who are rural based. There appears to be apparently a close relationship between a caste's internal organisation and the size and spatial distribution of its population. The castes pervaded by hierarchy and hypergamy had large populations spread evenly from village to village and frequently also from village to town over a large area. Castes pervaded by divisive tendencies had small populations confined to small areas separated from each other by considerable gaps. One of the clearly visible changes in the urban divide is the increase in the number of inter-divisional marriages, in contravention to the rule of endogamy. The degree of contravention involved in an inter-divisional marriage however, depends upon the order to which the marrying couple belong, i.e. it is highest at the first order and lowest at the fourth order. Those in the rural settings are more orthodox and still stick to the traditional mode of bride selection.

The *Shastras* ordain that *sagotra* and *sapinda* marriages should not be performed i.e. a person should not marry in his own *gotra* or *pravara*, because members of the same *gotra* trace the same ancestry, and hence are considered brothers and sisters. *Sapinda* are those who are within five degrees of affinity on the side of the mother and seven on the side of the father. The *pravara* "are those sacrificial fires which several *gotras* had in common". So persons of such *gotras* which had a common *pravara* cannot intermarry. This rule, of forbidding marriage within the same *gotra*, *pravara* is not observed strictly by the Gujarati Brahmans. In the Bhavnagar district of Gujarat "only the *gotra* of the father and not of the mother is considered (Trivedi, 1969)". However,

there are a few exceptions which will be found in the independent write-ups on few sections of Brahmans, for e.g. among the Girnar Brahman it has been reported that marriage with father's sister's daughter and mother's brother's daughter is performed.

Another rule of marriage prevalent is, that normally a person should marry within his own status group, but this is not rigidly followed and the incidence of hypergamy is reported from them, as has been said earlier. This system of hypergamy resulted in paucity of brides at the lower stratum which gave rise to the prevalence of dowry in the higher echelons and of bride-price among the lower strata. The Brahmans in general and Anvils, Khedawals and Girnars etc. in particular are well known for the high incidence of dowry payments that existed in their society.

Earlier, the Brahmans of Gujarat practised child marriages, but in the present it has been replaced by adult marriages. Another change which is noticeable is that custom of *Lagan Sammelan* (arranging of marriage) has been introduced in their community, recently. Periodically *sammelans* are held where boys and girls of marriagable age are invited on a particular day along with their parents and matches are settled. This is being done primarily to reduce marriage expenditure and problems in seeking alliances. Marriages are usually solemnized by negotiations, but among the Anavils, marriage by exchange is also quite common. A stray case of mutual consent and elopements are not unknown but such instances are not socially approved of. The usual symbol of married status for a woman, as reported from among the various section of Brahmins studied in Gujarat are *kanku* or (red powder on the parting of the hair) wearing of glass bangles and *mangalasutra* (bead necklace) which is known by different names in the local dialect in different regions, but these are not very strictly observed. Divorce is practised but of late, it has been reported, that the incidence is on the increase. Presently, divorce proceedings can be initiated by anyone of the aggrieved party in the court of law on grounds of cruelty, infidelity etc. The children of the divorced parents stay with either of the parents as per judicial decree. Widow remarriage is prohibited but a widower and male divorcee can however, remarry. Monogamy is the general rule of marriage, but on the death of the wife, sororal marriages can be held, and is permissible, but levirate is prohibited.

Patrilocal residence is quite common after marriage. The family which was of joint or extended type earlier is now fast moving towards nuclear homes, due to the children moving into diversified fields of occupation in search of livelihood.

The segment of a household family which breaks off from the parent body starts as an independent unit, quite often as a household consisting of only husband and wife. It gradually expands as children are born to the couple. When sons grow up, are married, and continue to live with their wives in the paternal household, it once again becomes an extended family. Thus continues the process of expansion and fission in the household family. The interpersonal relationship in the family is cordial, with avoidance and joking relationship existing between certain kin of the husband and the wife's side. As regards inheritance and succession, the Hindus are governed by the Hindu law, and so are the Brahmans. The system of Hindu law which is followed in Gujarat is the *Mitakshara* system by which the family property is inherited in the male line and by the law of male equigeniture. Normally, the homestead goes to the child with whom the parents stay for the rest of their life. Such a child normally happens to be the youngest son in the family. The succession is through the eldest son.

The social status of Brahman women in Gujarat is perceived as low in comparison to the men. They are mostly confined to the four walls of the house, doing household work and managing the family, except for a few, who are educated and are working in schools, colleges, government departments etc. Such women contribute to the family income. They also take part in all social, ritual and religious activities, but have only a limited role in the political sphere. Women in general do not have any decision making powers, as far as matters relating to their community is concerned, but have a definite say in family affairs. Women do not have any right of inheritance of property.

Dharam Shastras have prescribed as many as forty to forty eight *sanskaras*. These range from *garbhadharan* (foetus laying) to *pinda dan* (offering of rice balls), but among the Gujarati Brahmans only a few are performed, which are also almost similar to the other Hindu communities, residing in the area of their habitation. Of the sixteen *sanskars* or sacraments, Gujarati

Brahmans observe only four at their proper time. *Srimanta*, *Upanayana* or thread girding, *Vivah* or marriage and *Svargarohana* or funeral ceremonies are the ones observed by them. The delivery of the first child is the occasion of great rejoicing in the family. For ensuring safe and healthy delivery, a ritual known as *srimant*, *agharani* or *kholobharvo* (lap filling) is observed during the seventh month of pregnancy and thereafter the enceinte is sent to her house for delivery. This ritual is common throughout the Gujarat and in all Hindu communities. On the sixth or seventh day of birth, according to the local custom prevalent in different regions, *Chatti* is observed, when it is believed that the Almighty writes the fate of the new born. The parturient mother is considered polluted for about forty five days. *Mundan* or (tonsure) ceremony is also observed at the shrine of their *gotraj* (family deity) in case of male children in odd years of birth, but preferably before *janoi*. No specific ceremony is observed for first cereal feeding, but *janoi* or (sacred thread) ceremony is observed for male children before puberty, which marks their initiation into the *dwij* fold of Hinduism. Normally before marriage they adorn *janoi* of three strands, which doubles after marriage, i.e. two sets of three strands each are worn.

Marriage rites and ceremonies performed at the time of *vivah* or wedding are generally the same among all Hindus, though they vary in minor details according to the region. The rites commonly in vogue are in order of *kanyadaan*, *vivah homa* and *saptapadi*. These differ among the various subgroups of Brahmans while in the majority of the subgroups only four circumambulations called *mangal pheras* are performed. In a few, like Shrimalis, eight circumambulations are performed. These are interspread by a number of minor ceremonies. The marriage rites conclude by the circumambulation of the sacred fire and taking of marriage vows. The consummation of marriage takes place at the groom's place.

The dead in the community are cremated, the exception being the infants who are disposed off by burial. The mortal remains are collected and immersed in some river. Certain mortuary rituals are also observed from the tenth day to the thirteenth day, to propitiate the dead. During the first year, monthly, half-yearly and annual *shraddhas* are also held, thereafter, only death anniversary is observed.

The different sections of the Gujarati Brahmins are active in various fields of occupation, as a while some continue their traditional occupation of performing sacredotal services, officiating as temple priests, performing life-cycle rituals, some have taken to agriculture and other occupations like business, service in government and private sectors, teaching etc. According to the available information on the occupational status of the various sections of Brahmins, it is observed that as many as 42.85% of the sections are engaged in rendering sacredotal services to the various communities. 30.0% are primarily engaged in cultivation, 8.57% in merchantile trade, 10% in miscellaneous jobs and 8.57% of the community were such on which no information on their occupation was available. Such a large diversification of occupation is yet another plausible reason for such a high degree of differentiation, resulting in rise of sections in the community.

For prevention of infringement of social norms, caste councils have been formed on the lines of caste divisions. Among the first-order, there are associations for divisions of all the orders. These associations have been formed mainly to provide welfare, promote education, and to bring about reforms and social welfare. Most associations continue to retain their non-political character. Community members argue that various welfare programme of each caste association, especially in the field of marriage, such as reforms of customs, rituals and ceremonies and encouragement of inter-divisional marriages, are also seen by the members as a mode of creating a casteless modern society. These associations are headed by elected members of the community by ballot or voice votes. At times, the elder male members of the community also sit together and settle disputes. Besides their traditional council, statutory panchayats also exists.

Hinduism as it is practised by the people is a great synthesiser of various shades of thought in which the Vedic worship, reverence of trees, stones, animals and totems are all inextricably intermingled.

The Brahmins of Gujarat are generally the followers of Lord Shiva, whom they worship under different names like Shiva, Shankar and Mahadeva, either in their own houses or in temples. A few are Vaishnavas too and belong to the Vallabhacharya sect. The lowest order division of the Brahmin have each a presiding

deity called a *kul* deity for e.g. the Dhenuja section of the Modh Trivedi have Shakti goddess Bhadrīka as their *kuldevī* while the Jesthi-Malla, Tanduliya and the Agayasana Chaturvedis have Shakti goddess Nimbaja, Vaishnavi goddess Paramananda and Shakti goddess Chhatra as their *kula-devīs* respectively. Similarly, all sections are represented by either one or the other deity. A few Brahmans belong to the Swaminarayan sect, a sect founded during the early decades of the nineteenth century by Sahajanand, well known as Swami Narayan who tried to deliver Vaishnavism of those days from some of its corrupting influences. He advised the worship of and faith in one God who was Krishna who alone could relieve the soul from the fetters of the body.

The cow is regarded as the most sacred, and is of special ritual concern to them on account of its association with Lord Krishna; who is also popularly known as Gopala (cow-herd). The sanctity attached to the cow is well demonstrated by the extra-ordinary purity of her produce milk, dung, urine; these are not only pure things but are also purificatory agents. Brahmans also have cow worship as their ritual core, and one such festival by the name of Gopaashtami is commonly observed by them. Few trees and plants especially of banana, mango, *tulsi* (basil), *pipal* (*Ficus religiosa*) and *bargad* (*Ficus indica*), are of ritual importance and are worshipped too. A Brahman can be seen watering a basil plant and doing *aarti* (ovation of light) of the plant almost daily.

The worship of Shiva *linga* (Phallic form of Shiva), *Shaligram* (ebonite emblem of Vishnu - the preserver) can well be seen being worshipped on various occasions.

The Brahmans besides their principle presiding deities also worship other gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon like Ganesh, Hanuman, Mahalakshmi, etc. In addition to these, there are scores of shrines spread all over Gujarat, in which are lodged the images of 'lesser' deities, and local godlings like Sitala Mata, Sati Mata etc. The community members are their own priests, and they officiate at all their life-cycle rituals and perform sacerdotal services. The exceptions to this being the Kayatia and Tapodhan Brahmans, who are considered as degraded Brahman, for their accepting the offerings made on the eleventh day after death and for accepting the offerings made to Lord Shiva respectively. They take part in all the fairs and festivals of the

region. The most prominent and pervasive is the festival of Navratri, Diwali, Dusherra, Janmasthami etc. The details of the religious attributes of the various sections of the Brahmans will be found in the individual description on some of the Brahman communities.

The bulk of the community is reportedly not involved in any form of plastic, graphic or glyptic art forms, except the Sompura Salat, a section of the Sompura Brahmans who have taken to the making of small sculpture of Shri Somnath, as well as build temples all across the country and earn their livelihood by it. They are skilled craftsman in this art. A few of the Brahmans who perform sacerdotal services are also apt in making line diagrams while making the *navagrahs* and preparing the *bedi* (platform) for the rites.

The community has various oral traditions which are handed down through the generations, and are in the form of folk legends. Folksongs are not specific to the community but are sung by women as are prevalent in the region on social and ritual occasions. The *garba* and the *dandiaras* are common forms of dance which married and unmarried girls perform especially on Navratri. This dance form is again not specific to the community, but nevertheless, it is in practise.

Ketkar (1964) writes, the classes, races and occupations exclude themselves from other groups while there is an understanding that one group is superior to the other. Thus, from the material point of view, each caste is a distinct entity, separate from all other castes. Brahmans as they consider themselves, are of the upper strata. The rules of commensality, connubiality and inter-dining, especially with reference to the *kachcha*, *pakka* and *seedha* food, acts as a good identity marker for the ritual superiority of the community. It has already been stated that there are no hierarchical divisions in the first order division and the fact is well seen in the social gatherings of the *chaurasi* and *bandaro* group, when all inter-dine together from food cooked in a common hearth alongwith the Kayatiya and the Tapodhans. Matrimonial relations traditionally were limited to one's own section.

While interacting with other communities of the locality, the ritual status of the interacting community is seen. The ritual purity of food given, accepted or exchanged is a factor of great importance in all inter-caste dining relations. Certain types of

baked, steamed or roasted food (*kachcha* food) are regarded as very pure, and consequently highly pollutable, others prepared with special ingredients like *ghee* (clarified butter) and fried (*pakka* food) are less pollutable, there are still others, for example, green fruits and vegetable with peelable skins, which are regarded as least pollutable (Blunt, 1931; Ghurye, 1951, Hutton, 1951). This is so, since the last can easily be washed to remove touch pollution; and the skin can be peeled off.

On the basis of their dietary relations, the Hindu communities in Gujarat can be arranged in the three categories, which overlap the social hierarchical ranking of communities; in terms of economic status, landholding and other occupations and ritual status perceived by community members themselves. These are (1) High (2) Middle (3) Low. The middle category is divided further into (a) Peasant communities and (b) Artisan or Service communities. The Brahman with its various section, the Rajputs, Vania, Kayastha etc. constitute the high class. The middle order is represented by communities like Bharwad, Bhat, Barot, Bhoi, Kharwa, Koli, Mochi, Kanbi, Patidar, Mali, Artisan communities etc. While the backward castes, depressed and untouchables and other communities who are engaged in ritually impure occupations have been classed as low. Thus, a Brahman who ranks high can accept all types of food from such communities ranking high, but can accept only *pukka* food from other peasant and artisan communities, ranked in middle and only *seedha* food from those 'low'. On the other hand, persons from other communities belong to middle and low order can accept all types of food from the high with the exception of the Kayasthas and Tapodhans from whom even non-Brahman castes do not accept food and water.

The rigours of pollution, particularly contact and distant pollution, have been obliterated to a great extent in urban centres, during the last four decades. The democratic liberal forces, industrial progress, education, western influence etc. appear to be responsible for the changed attitudes and variation in the value patterns of the people in towns and cities.

Rules regarding the acceptance of drinking water from another community are similar to those regarding acceptance of food. In the urban centers, there are no restrictions to the sharing of wells and other water resources, facilities of road, school, crematorium etc.

As most of the sections of Brahmans are agriculture based, they need to depend on other peasant and service rendering communities with whom they have *jajmani* relations and who receive a fixed quantity of produce at the time of harvest, in lieu of their services. Symbiotic relationship also exists only with the ritually pure communities.

The attitude of the Brahmans towards literacy and education has been quite positive and we find a high rate of literacy in both males and females in comparison to the others. This has been so because of their long association with the scholarly work with which they are associated. Health, medical care and family welfare has also received a favourable response; and they avail of modern medicare, which they make use of in combination with their indigenous medicare. People who live in urban centers have facilities of cooking gas (LPG), whereas those who are in villages have to content themselves with firewood.

Rajendra Sarkar

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LIST A

**SUB GROUPS OF GUJARATI BRAHMANS
(EXCLUDING SUB-SECTIONS)**

Sub-groups as listed by J. Wilson (1877)	Sub-groups as listed by M.A.Sherring (1872)	Sub-groups as listed by Kavi Dalpatram (1887)	Sub-groups as by R.E.Enthoven (1920)
1. Abhira	Abhira	-	-
2. -	-	-	Agarwal
3. -	-	-	Agarsindwal
4. Agastyavala	Agastyala	Agastyavala	-
5. Akshayamangalas	Akshaymangala	Aksharamangala	Akshayamangalas
6. Anavala or	Anavala or	Anavala	Anavala
Bhatela	Bhatela		
7. -	-	-	Anodhia
8. Audichya	Audichya	Sahasra audichya	Audich
9. -	-	-	Ashpura
10. Baradas	Badadas	-	-
11. Basuldars	Basalada	-	-
12. Bedua	Bedua	-	-
13. -	-	-	Bhalvi
14. Bhargava	Bhargava	Bhargava	Bhargav
15. Bharathanas	Barathana	Bhartatana	Bharthana
16. Bhojakas or magas	-	-	-
17. Bhukhaniyas	-	-	Bhukania
18. Borsidhas	Borsidha	-	Borsada
19. Chapilas	Chapila	-	-
20. -	-	-	Chaun
21. Chovishas	Chovish	Chovisha	Chovisa or Chorisa
22. Dadhichas	Dadhicha	Dadicha	Dadhich or Dadhichi
23. Dahimas	Dahima	-	Dahema or Dayama
24. -	-	Dahiya	-
25. -	-	-	Dareda
26. Dashaharas	Dashahra	-	-

Sub-groups as listed by J. Wilson (1877)	Sub-groups as listed by M.A.Sherring (1872)	Sub-groups as listed by Kavi Dalpatram (1887)	Sub-groups as by R.E.Enthoven (1920)
27. Deshayalas	Deshavala	Deshaval	Deshawal
28. -	-	Dhodval	-
29. Dravidas	Dravira	Dravira	-
30. Durmala	Durmala	-	-
31. -	-	-	Gadiali
32. Gangaputras	Gangaputra	Ganga putra	Gangaputra
33. Garodas	Garoda	-	Garoda
34. Gayavalas	Gavavala	Gavaval	Gavawal
35. Ghodavalas	Ghoravala	-	Godhwal or Gorwal
36. Govavalas	Golawala	-	-
37. Girnaras	Girnara	Girnara	Girnara
38. Gomitras	Gomitra	Gomitra	Gomitra
39. Gomativalas	Gomativala	Gomativai	Gomatiwal
40. Gugalis	Gugali	Guggali	Gujali
41. -	-	-	Gurjar
42. Gurjara-gaudas	Gurjara-gaura	Gurjara-god	Gurjar-gauda or Choda
43. -	-	-	Guru
44. Hanushana	Hanushana	-	-
45. Harsora	Harsora	Harshora	Harsolia or Harsola
46. -	Havala	-	-
47. Hiranyajiya	Hiranyajiya	-	-
48. Itavala	-	Itaval	Indhval or Idhaval
49. Jambus	Jambu	Jhambu	Jamu or Jambuvant
50. Jarolas	Jarola or Jhalora	Jharola	Jharola
51. Jila	Jila	-	-
52. -	-	Josadhara	-
53. Kalingas	Kalinga	Kalinga	Kalinga
54. Kandoliya	Kandoliya	Khandolia	Khandolia
55. Kanojiya	Kanaujiya	Kanojya	-
56. Kapilas	Kapila	Kapila or Kapola Nagor	Kapil or Kapol
57. -	-	Karbeliya	Karbeliya
58. Karedas or Karera	Kareda	-	Karethas

Sub-groups as listed by J. Wilson (1877)	Sub-groups as listed by M.A.Sherring (1872)	Sub-groups as listed by Kavi Dalpatram (1887)	Sub-groups as by R.E.Enthoven (1920)
59. Karnatika	Karnatika	-	-
60. Kharkheliyas	Kharkheliya	-	Karkhelia
61. Khadayatas	Khadayata	Kadyata	Khadayata
62. Khedavalas	Kheravala	Khedevala	Khedawal or Khedwa
63. Kodava	Kodava	Khedevala	Khedawal or Khedwa
64. Kulabha	Kulabha	-	-
65. Kundu	Kundu	-	-
66. Lalatas	Lalata	Lalata	Lalat
67. -	-	-	Madhyachal
68. Magmaryas	Magmaryas	-	-
69. Maithila	Maithila	-	-
70. Malavis	Malawi or Malavika	Malawi	Godmalvi
71. -	-	-	Malikwal
72. Maretha or Maharashtra	Maretha or Maharashtra	Maratha	-
73. Maru	Maru	Maru	-
74. Mastana or Mahasthani	Mastana	-	-
75. Mathura	Mathura	-	-
76. Mevadas	Mewara	-	Mewada
77. Modhas	Modha	Madh	Modh
78. Modha Maltras	Morha Maltra	Modh Maltra	Madh Maritra
79. Motalas	Motala	Mottala	Motala
80. Nagaras	Nagara	Nagar	Nagar
81. Nanduanas	Nanduana	Nanduana	Nandrana or Nandrana
82. Nasiparas	Narsipara	Narasapura	Narsingpura or Narsigpura
83. Naradikas	Naradika	Naradika	Nardik
84. -	-	-	Namal
85. Nandodras	Nandodra	Nandodara	Nandora or Nandodra
86. -	-	-	Nandhana
87. Napalas	Napala	-	Napal
88. Nayakvalas	Nayakvala	-	-
89. -	-	Nathal	-
90. -	-	-	Oswal

Sub-groups as listed by J. Wilson (1877)	Sub-groups as listed by M.A.Sherring (1872)	Sub-groups as listed by Kavi Dalpatram (1887)	Sub-groups as by R.E.Enthoven (1920)
91. Padmivala	Padmivala	Padmisala	-
92. Pallivalas	Pallivala	Pallival	Paliwal or Palewal
93. Pangoras	Pangora	Pangora	Panjora or Pangora
94. Parashariyas	Parashariya	-	Parja or Parasar
95. -	-	-	Parsolia
96. -	-	-	Porwal or Porwad
97. -	-	Prathval	-
98. Prayagavalas	Pravagavala	-	-
99. Predatavala	Predatavala	-	-
100. Pretavalas	Pretavala	-	Preteval
101. Pudavala	Pudavala	Pudhaval	Pundwal
102. Pushkarnas	Pushkarna or Pokharna	Pushkarna	Pushkarna or Pokhana
103. -	-	-	Puwawal
104. Rajavalas	Rajavala	Rajaval	Rajwal or Rangwal
105. -	-	-	Raikula
106. Rampura	Rampura	-	-
107. Ravavala	Ravavala	-	-
108. Rayapulas	Rayapula	Rayapura or Rayapula	Raipura
109. Rayasthalas	Rayathala	-	Raisthala
110. Rayakavalas	Rayakavala	Raikval	Rayakwal
111. Rodhavalas	Rodhavala	Rodaval	Rodhwal or Rotwal
112. Rundwal	-	-	-
113. Sachora	Sachora	Sachora	Sachora (2- Sub-ivious)
114. Sajodhras	Sajodhra	-	Sajodhra
115. -	-	Sanotia	Sanothia
116. Sanodhyas	Sanadhiya	-	Sanodia or Sanath or Sanaola
117. Sarvariya	Sarwadiya	Sarvaria	Sarvaria
118. Sarasvatas	Saraswata	Saraswat	Sarasvat
119. Sevak	-	-	Sevak

Sub-groups as listed by J. Wilson (1877)	Sub-groups as listed by M.A.Sherring (1872)	Sub-groups as listed by Kavi Dalpatram (1887)	Sub-groups as by R.E.Enthoven (1920)
120. Shevada	Shevada	-	-
121. Shri gaudas	Sri gaura	Sri god	Shri gaud
122. Shrimalis	Srimali	Srimali	Shri mali
123. Somapara	Somapara	Sompura or Sompura	Sonpura or Sompura
124. Sthitishas	Sthitishas	-	-
125. Talajiya	Talajiya	-	-
126. Tangamodiyas	Tangamodiya	Thangmodiya	Tangmodia
127. Tapodanas	Tapodana	-	Tapodhan
128. Tilinga	Tilinga or tailinga	Trilinga	-
129. Titraga	Titraga	-	-
130. -	Trilotyi	-	-
131. Udambaras	Udambara	Udambara	Udambara
132. Unevala	Unevala	Unevala	-
133. -	Utkal	-	Utkal
134. Vadadras or Valadras	Valadra or Varadra	Valadhara	Vadadra or Valandra
135. -	-	Vansha Vadya	Vainsh Vadhra
136. Valmika	Valmiki	Valmik	Balam or Valam
137. -	Vatula	-	-
138. Vayadas	-	Vayada	Vayada
139. Yajnikvalas	Yajnikvala	Yagnikval	Yajnikval

LIST B

SUB-GROUPS OF GUJARATI BRAHMANS

1. **Abhira** : Abhiras are of Rajput origin. They derive their name from acting as priests of Abhira of Ahir, and are known as Ahir-gor, which is a section of Audichya Brahman.
2. **Agastyavala or Agastyala** : Derive their name from Rishi Agastya. Found in Nimadi and Vadavar in Kathiawad, They are now cultivators.
3. **Akshayamangalas or Akshaymangala or Aksharamangala** : The indestructible Puritans. Found at Palanpur and in Rajasthan. A section of Shrimali.
4. **Anavala or Bhatela** : Designated after the village of Anaval near Surat. Predominantly found in Surat and Baroda. They are cultivators. Since they cultivated rice which is also known as bhat, they were called Bhatela. They are also referred to as Mastan on Mahasthani.
5. **Audichya or Sahasra** : Derive their name from the Audichya (the Audichya Northerners), and the Sahasra Audichya means a section of 1000 Audichyas. They are segmented into three sections : (1) Siddhpura (2) Sihor (3) Tolakya. They are also divided into three territorial divisions (1) Marwadi Audichya (2) Kachhi Audichya (3) Vagadiya Audichya. They are also known as Gors (priests), and derive their name from the community they serve, as Kunbigor, Mochigor, Darjigor, Grandhrapagor, Koligor, Ahirgor and Rajor. For acting as priests to Kunbi (cultivator), Mochi (shoe maker), Darji (tailor), Randhrapagor (players of musical instruments), Koli, Ahir, Gohil and Jadeja Rajputs respectively.
6. **Baradas** : They are a split from Vishalnagara and

Vadnagara section of Nagar Brahmans, who from difficulties found by them in marrying in their own caste, take wives from another, as such were compelled to leave the village, but the section continues.

7. **Basuldars or Basulda** : Vilas has mentioned about them, but nothing is known about them now.
8. **Bedua** : Named after Bedu (water pot). They acted as water carriers.
9. **Bhargavas or Bhargava** : Designed after the adjective form of Bhrigu, the name of one of the ancient Rishis, from whom they trace their lineage. Chiefly found in Bharuch and Surat. They have two divisions Dasa and Visa who do not intermarry.
10. **Bharathanas or Barathana**: Designated after the village by the same name in Marwar. Found on the banks of Narmada above Bharuch.
11. **Bhojaks or Magas** : They are originally Shrimali Brahmans who adopted the Jain faith for a living. They are chiefly found in Kathiawar and Kutch. They are called Bhojaks or Eaters because they dine with Oswal Vanias. They act as priests to the Jains and eat with them. They allow widow remarriage.
12. **Bhukhaniyas or Bhukania** : Are said to be in Kathiawad and is a surname of the Audichya Brahman in the Gohilwada region.
13. **Borsidhas or borsida or Borsada** : A corrupted word for Varahsiddha-their ancestor and a settlement formed by that name called Borsad. They are agriculturists.
14. **Chapilas** : They were reported in Surat in 1827 but little is known about them now.
15. **Chovishas or Chovish** : Are of high pretensions, of the "twenty fourth grade" in dignity. Divided into two sections, Mota and Nana. Chiefly found in Baroda and at Sinor Janor near the Narmada. One of the

territorial divisions of Trevedi Mewada Brahman.

16. **Dadhichas or Dadicha or dadidch or dadidichi** : They take their name from one of the Rishis. They beg, cultivate land, or act as Gurus. They are found at Valvad on Mahi and are originally a division of Sahasra Audichya.
17. **Dahimas or Dahima or Dayima or Dahema** : Designated after a section of Rajput, so called by their wandering propensities. They are extensively spread in marwad and dhundar region of rajasthan. They consider themselves to be descended from the twelve sons of Pipyalayan, son of Dadhicha. They are mostly Pandits. They claim to be Adi-Gaudas.
18. **Dashaharas or Dashahra Dasora** : Found near Anhilwada Patan. Worshipper of devi.
19. **Deshavalas or Deshaval** : The deshavalas receive their name from *desha*, a country, or *deesa* in palanpur and have some pretensions to be, par excellence, the Brahmans of the country of Gujarat. They are principally found however, in the Kheda. Those of them who reside at Surat form a distinct caste of their own, named Deshavala Brahman Surati. They are priests to Desaval Vania.
20. **Dravidas or dravira** : Though listed in Gujarat, but not found by Wilson in 1877. Travelling Dravidas frequently visit Gujarat from Tamilnadu.
21. **Durmala** : A section of Khedawal Brahman as reported by Rajor.
22. **Gangaputra** : They are a detachment of the Tirtha mendicants of the Kanyakubja Brahmans, who have come to Gujarat and have become isolated from the main body of caste.
23. **Garoda** : They act as priests to all unclean

castes, including Bhangis. They claim to be Brahmans who, according to one account, were degraded because their head married the daughter of his religious teacher or guru. According to another story, they agreed to act as priests to dhedas, according to third account, at a sacrifice they ate a piece of the victim, and according to a fourth, they are descendants of the Brahman priest who was given to the Dhedas by Siddhraj. Act as priests of Bhangis, Dhedas, Chamars, Shenvas and Turis, all of whom style themselves as Brahmans. Some till, others weave and a few are tailors.

24. Gayavalas or Gayavala : An offshoot of the mendicant Brahmins of Gaya. Found in Kheda and Nadiad.
or Gayawal
25. Ghodavalas or Ghoravala : They are said to be from marwad. Act
or Godhwal or Gorwal as priests to shravaks or Jain laymen.
26. Govavalas or Golawala : Named after their connection with
or Golavalas gohil rajputs. Chiefly found in kheda district.
27. Girnars : They derive their name from the ancient mountain city of Girinagar, now represented by Junagadh. They reckon themselves as Panch Guda. They have a tradition that they were settled at Girnar by Krishan. According to the Prabhaskhand, they came originally from the foot of the Himalayas. They are chiefly found in Kathiawar and Kutch. They have the monopoly of the office of priests to pilgrims visiting Girnar and Somnath Patan. They are Vaishnav temple priests, beggars, traders, money-lenders, cooks and husbandmen. They are divided into Three sections : (1) the Junagadhya Girnars of the Junagadh (2) the Chorwada Girnars of the town of

Chorwad (3) the Ajakiyas who are designated after The village of Ajak.

28. Gomitras or gomitra : They are said to be of kanyakubja or saraswata origin, and to be rigvedis. They are found at Ambaji Mata, south-east of Mount Abu. They also protect cows and mix with the Gomtivals.
29. Gomativalas or Gomatiwal: Believed to be descendants of Gotama Rishi from whom they derive the name. Others opine they are from the city of Gomti, among the Barda Hills in South-West Kathiawar. They live on alms.
30. Gugalis or Guggalior Gujalli: They are chiefly found in dwarka. They are said to take their name from gokul, sacred to krishna near Mathura. According to yet another account, they are named after Gugal or incense, by offering which, they succeeded in scaring away a demon who prevented them from settling in Dwarka. Gugalis are priests in the temples of Krishna at Bet Dwarka and Dakor. Many of them are servants to Vallabhacharay Maharajas. They are also called Tapodhan Brahmans.
31. Gurjara gaudas or Gurjar : They get their denomination either from their acting as priests of Gurjara tribe or from their having been isolated from other Gaudas, because of their residence in Gujarat. Some of them are denominated Sevalas and some Upadhyas. They are called as Shri God Brahmans.
32. Hanushara or Hansuhunda: They are reportedly found in the Khambat or the present day Panchamahar according to Charotar Sarv Sangrah.
33. Harsora or Harshora : They derive their name from Harsor or Harsi, south-east of Prantij. They are priests to Harsora Vanias whom they follow in their merchantile wanderings.

34. Hiranyajiyas : Wilson (1877) states that they "seem now unknown in Gujarat, though they are said to be found in Rajputana and at Banaras.
35. Itavala : John Wilson (1877) reports, that "the Itavalas, though still on the Gujarat lists, appear to have entirely disappeared from the country". Mirat-e-Ahmadi states that they came from Itawa in Uttar Pradesh during Moghul period alongwith Saraswats.
36. Jambus or Jhambu or Jamu or Jambuvant : Designated after the Jambusara town in Bharuch near Gulf of Canbay. They claim descent from Yajnavalkya. It is stated by Enthoven that they came alongwith Motala and Kapil Brahmans in Gujarat from the adjoining state of Maharashtra, where they belonged to the Deshasths group. This seems probable since the customs of the Motala, Jambus and Kapils are mostly alike and a century ago marriages took place between the Motalas and Jambu Brahmans. They are astrolo-gers, mendicants or cultivators. Found chiefly in Bharuch and Baroda.
37. Jarolas, Jarola or Jhalora or Jharola : They derive their name from Jhalor or Jalore in Rajasthan. Act as family priests to Jhalora vanias.
38. Jilas : Wilson (1877) states, that "this is one of the additional castes named in the list of eighty four furnished to Dr. Drummond by Bhavanishankar of Bharoach. Of these Brahmans, little is now known".
39. Kalingas or kalinga : Wilson (1877) reports, the Kalingas are a division of Panch-Gauda Brahmans, now principally settled at Kalingapatan on the southern coast of Orissa. Individuals of the original stock may still be visitors or pilgrims in Gujarat. A few are settled in Anhilvad Pattan according to Rajgor.

40. **Kandolia or Khandoliya or :** They derive their name from Kandol
Kandoliya or kandola town in Jhalawa division of Kathiawar.
They act as cooks to Thakurs, family
priests to Kapol and Sorathiya Banias.
They worship Devi Samudri.
41. **Kanojliya, Kanaujiya or :** They are an offshoot of the
Kanojya Kanyakubja of the East i.e. Uttar
Pradesh, but do not eat with them .
They belong to the Panch-Gauda.
42. **Kapilas or Kapila or Kapil:** Named after the sage Kapil from whom
they trace ancestry. They are chiefly
found in Bharuch and Surat and are
mostly cultivators, parti-cularly
Jambusar.
43. **Karedas, Karetha :** Designated after the town of Karad in
Karera or Karahada Satara, the sacred junction of the
Koina and Krishna in Maharashtra.
They are also known as Maratha
Brahmans. There are various
traditions regarding their origin, all of
which connect their creation with
camel bones. They have 24 Gotras.
They are writers, priests, husband-
man etc. Under the early Peshwas they
are said to have offered human
sacrifices to their household Goddess.
Their family Goddess are Mahalaxmi,
Durga, Mhalsa, Bhavani etc. They are
believed to be found in Idar in
Sabarkantha district of Gujarat
according to Wilson (1877). According
to rajgor about 400-500 years ago,
they settled in Surat and Idar, but
presently they have got mixed with
Audichya Brahman.
44. **Karnatika :** Visitors from Karnataka. They are
described as Joshis in the Bombay
Gazetteer. They are Yajurvedis and
followers of Shankaracharya. They are
astrologers, cultivators and family
priests to middle class Hindus.
45. **Kharkheliyas :** They are called as Pardeshis of Mewar
from where they have migrated. Also
designated as Kapola Nagars, which

according to kavi dalpatram is a section of Kapils.

46. Khadayata or Kadayata : Designated after the Khadat, a village near Prantij in Ahmedabad. Also found in Ahmedabad and Bharuch. Act as priests to Khadayata Vantias.
47. Khedayalas, Khedavalas : They take their name from Kheda or Khedava
Khedava : They take their name from Kheda or Kaira. According to their tradition they have descended from a band of Tripravari and Panchpravari Brahmans, who under the lead of Shankar Joshi and Shod Dave, moved from Shrirangapatam in Mysore and settled in Kheda, a Rajput of the lunar stock. According to Rajgor they came to Kheda in 1080. Prior to their coming to Kheda from Trichatur a village 3 miles away from Tripali, they were known as Vrihchchar. They are divided into two sections ; one who accepted the Gifts, settled in town and were known as Bhitra, while the other who refused were known as Baj.
48. Kodava : Designated after the village Koda near Khambat, presently Panchmahal district.
49. Kulabhas : A name given to certain class of brahmans, not born in lawful wedlock, according to Wilson (1877).
50. Kundus : Wilson (1877) writes, "of the Kundus I have not been able to hear anything. The word Kundu in Gujarati means either a vessel, or an ornament of the ear."
51. Lalatas or Lalat : Wilson (1877) writes, "the Lalatas are said by some to be in Kachha, near Lakhpatt, but I did not recognise any of them in that locality, when I visited it with Dr. Duff in 1840. By others, their opinion is probably incorrect, they are said to be denominated from the ancient province of lata near the Narmada. From Lata the Lad Vanyas

- also received their designation".
52. **Magmaryas** : Wilson (1877) states, that "this is one of the Additional castes named in the list of eighty four furnished to Dr. Drummond by Bhavanishankar of Bharoach. Of these Brahmans, little is now known".
53. **Maithila** : They are Brahmans of Mithila, as visitors from east India (Bihar). Work as teachers, and teach *Karamkanday*. Presently found in Siddhpur, Dakor and Ahmedabad.
54. **Malavis, Malawi or Malavika** : Designated after the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh. They are found in Gujarat being adjacent to it. They are often shopkeepers and cultivators.
55. **Maretha or Maharashtra** : They are Brahmans from Maharashtra region, who are settled in Gujarat since the establishment of Gaikwad government in Baroda. They cater to the respective castes of the country to which they belong.
56. **Maru** : Derive their name from Marwar (Rajasthan) or Maru. Only a few are reported to be in Kheda. They are a section of the Audichya Brahmans.
57. **Mastana or Mahasthani** : They are chiefly found in Siddhpur, and have abandoned Brahmanical rites. They are agriculturists. They are Anvala Brahmans and are sometimes called as Mastanas (Quasi Mahasthani, of Great territory) a name applied to cultivating Brahmans in every part of India.
58. **Mathura or Mathula** : They are brahmans, named after the city of Mathura. Wilson (1877) writes, "I have not been able to hear anything satisfactory respecting their location in Gujarat".
59. **Mewadas, Mevadas or Mewara** : They are Brahmans originally from the Mewar region of Rajasthan. The three

offshoots from them forming distinct castes which are found in Gujarat are (1) Bhata Mevadas (2) Trivedi Mevadas (3) Chorasī Mewadas. According to Enthoven (1920), "they are mostly beggars, family priests and a few of them peasants".

60. **Modhs, Modha or Madh** : They receive their designation from the village of Modhana, near Siddhpura. They are fabled to have received this village as a Krishnarpana on the occasion of the marriage of Rama to Sita. They are divided into two sections (1) Trivedi Modh (2) Chaturvedi Modh, which did not entertain or intermarry Earlier, whereas no such restrictions exist now. The Chaturvedi modhs are further divided into (1) Jesthimal (2) Agayasma (3) Tandulya or Tandulja and (4) Dhenuja. Besides these castes of Modhs, there were various provincial associations of Modhs forming other distinct castes in the matter of food and intermarriage. They are principally found in the Ahmedabad and Kheda districts, but are widely scattered in other districts.
61. **Modh Maitras, Madh Maitra or Morha Maitra** : Wilson (1877) writes, "of the Modha Maitras but little is known. Perhaps, they are some isolated body from the east of India now associated with the Modhas. They are said to be found in Kheda district".
62. **Motala or Mottala** : They derive their name from the town of Mota, south-east of Surat. They act as clerks, Shastris, Joshis and mendicants. Enthoven (1920) writes, "they appear to be originally Deshasth Brahmans, a section of the Marathi Brahmans". 'according to one account they came into Gujarat on account of cruelties of malik kafar (A.D. 1306). Another account puts their arrival in Gujarat somewhat later, and gives as

the reason, the pressure of the great Durga Devi famine (1396-1408 A.D.). It is stated that they were accompanied by the Jambu and Kapil Brahmans, all of whom originally belonged to the same stock. This seems probable since the customs of the Motalas, Jambus and Kapils are mostly alike, and a century ago inter-marriage took place between the Motalas and Jambu Brahmans.

63. Nagars or Nagaras : The word Nagara is the adjective form of *Nagar*, City. It is applied to six principal castes of Brahmans in Gujarat viz. (1) Vadnagara Brahmans (2) Vishalanagara Brahmans (3) Sathodara Brahmans (4) Prashnora Brahmans (5) Krishnora Brahmans (6) Chitroda. These divisions get their designations respectively from certain towns in the north-eastern portion of that province. According to Enthoven (1920) Chitrodas and Krashnoras are not found in Gujarat. Prashnoras are found chiefly in Kathiawar as *Vaid* (medical practioners). Sathodras are numerous in Ahmedabad and Kaira and work as clerks, money lenders and landholders. Vishnagaras are chiefly found in Ahmedabad, Surat and Baroda as money lenders, cultivators and servants. Vadnagaras are found all over Gujarat.
64. Nanduanas, Nandrana or : Designated after the village Nandavana
Nandraina in Marwar (Rajasthan). Found in village near Bharuch. They claim descent from sage Nandi.
65. Narsipara or Narsapura or: Designated after the village Narsipara
Narsingupra (from Narsingpur) in Palanpur. They are Vallabhacharyas and act as pujaris at the shrine of Krishna at Dakor in Kheda.
66. Naradikas, Naradika or : Designated after Narad Rishi. Chiefly
Nardik located at Khambat. They are mostly

- cultivators, mendicants and Servants. Not a numerous body.
67. Nandodras or Nandora : Designated after the village Nandod near Rajpipala and Dharampur. Most of them are mendicants while a few are cultivators.
68. Napalas : Named after village Napa in Borsad taluka in Khera. They are cultivators and raise tobacco. They are very few in number and claim that they originally belonged to the Audichya stock.
69. Nayakvalas : So designated after officiating for Koli Nayaks. According to Wilson (1877) they are found near dwarika.
70. Oswal or Osvala : they act as priests to Osvalas, a class of Mechantile Jainas. Their Kuldevi is Mahalaxmi whose image was transferred from Srimal (Bhinmal) to Anhilpur or Pattan in times of Gujarat kings. They are a section of Shrimali Brahmans.
71. Padmivalas or Padmisala : Derive their name from Padma (Lotus) sacred to Lord Vishnu. Mainly found at Ujjain in Malwa (MP), in the adjoining area. Wilson (1877) writes, "they are now little known in Gujarat".
72. Pallivalas, pallivala : Designated after the town of Pali in Rajasthan. reportedly do not inter dine or intermarry with other Brahmans. Belong to the Kanyakubja Brahman division. Chiefly found in Ahmedabad, Kutch and Kathiawar. Some are cultivators but most are traders and merchants. They have two sections (1) Gurjar Palliwal and (2) Mewad Palliwal . They have twelve gotras according to Wilson (1877). The two sections do not eat together. They are also known as Nandwanas.
73. Pangora or panjora : According to Wilson (1877), they are

said to belong to Marwar. Though listed in Gujarat, but nothing is heard of them, being at present in Gujarat.

74. Parashariya, Parasar or Parja or Parajla : They are also called as Ahir Gor. Principally found in Kutch and Kathiwar. They originally belong to the Audichya stock. According to some they take their name from paraj near Junagadh, whereas according to others they are named after Sage Parashar, from whom they claim descent. They are priests of Ahirs and Charans with whom they eat. They allow widow remarriage.
75. Porwal or porwad : According to Raj gor they are originally from Marwar and are priests of Jains. In Banaskantha district of Gujarat, they are priests of Audichya Brahmans.
76. Prayagavalas : Wandering Brahman devotees and solicitors for the Prayaga pilgrimage at the confluence of river Ganga and Yamuna, which is also known as Prayagraj.
77. Predatavala : One of the additional caste named in the list of the eighty four furnished to Dr. Drummond by Bhavani Shanker of Bharuch, as mentioned by Wilson (1877). Wilson further writes of these Brahmans, it will be noticed, little is now known.
78. Pretavalas or Preteval : Wilson (1877) states, "they are yajurvedis and are found chiefly in Kathiawad. They are now cultivators.
79. Pudavala, Pudhavala or Pundwal : Wilsons (1877) states, "the Pudavalas also act as priests to Jainas, though they profess Sama and Yajur-vedas".
80. Pushkarna or Pokharna : They are designated after the Pushkar or Pokhar lake near Ajmer. They are said to have been builders who dug out Pushkar lake and in consequence were created Brahmans. They still

- worship the *kodoali* or pickaxe at the Dusshera festival. They are employed by Marwadi merchants in buying and selling. Some of them are settled in Kheda district. They are chiefly found in kutch and kathiwar. They act as family priests to Bhatias.
81. Rajavalas or Rajval or Rangwal : The Rajvalas are found in the Kheda district, particularly at Kapadwanj. They profess the Yajurved.
82. Rampura : Designated after the village of rampura now found in the Pargana of Dakor and professing the Sam vedas. Wilson (1877) writes, "of these Brahmans it will be noticed little is now known".
83. Ravavala : The Ravavalas (Ravalas) are said to get their name from a village named Rava. They are found at Nadyad and other places in Kheda.
84. Rajapula : They derive their name from Rayapur, a suburb of Ahmedabad.
85. Rayasthala or Rayathala : They are chiefly found in Lunawada, Patan and Harsol. They came to Gujarat from Marwar. They take their name from Rayasthal or royal place i.e. dwellers of capital town. They are mostly beggars and Karamkandi Brahmans. They belong to Vaishnav Sampradaya and their kuldevi is Pratyangla. They are considered as degraded Brahman and confronting them is considered a bad omen. According to Wilson (1877), They are an additional caste in a list of the eightyfour furnished to Drummond by Bhavanishanker of Bharoch. "Of these Brahmans little is now known".
86. Rayakavalas : They are chiefly found in Ahmedabad and a few are in Baroda, where they have a name as teachers or *Shastris*. They take their name from Raika near Dhanduka in Ahmedabad. They are

divided into two non inter-communicating sections viz. The Nanas and the Mothas. They are mostly cultivators.

87. Rodhavalā

: They are chiefly found in Mahikantha. Principally cultivators and mendicants. A few of them are merchants too. They are Audichya Brahmans of Siddhpur.

88. Rundwal

: They are chiefly found in Ahmedabad and are cultivators and beggars.

89. Sachora

: They are named after the village of Sachora in Marwar (Rajasthan). They are Vallabhacharyas and are cook to the royal families of Surat and Ahmedabad. They are chiefly found in Kutch and Kathiawar. They are divided into Bisa and Dasa sections. According to Enthoven (1920), some are cooks in the Vallabhacharya temples, beggars and traders and most of them are cultivators.

90. Sajodhra or Sajodras

: They are chiefly found in Bharuch, and take their name from Sajod, a village in the Ankleshwar taluqa of the Broach (Bharuch) district. Tradition asserts that Rama made them Brahmans to assist him in the performance of a sacrifice, but their occupation, appearance and customs support the view that they are of the same stock as the Anavalas. They are mostly cultivators.

91. Sanodhyas, Sanadhiya
Sanodia, Sanath or
Sanola

: The Sanodhyas according to Wilson (1877), are an offset from the Gauda caste of the Sanodhyas, abundant in central India and the Rajput states. They are Yajurvedis and gain their livelihood by service, mendicancy, cultivation and merchandise. According to Rajgor they are not in Gujarat.

92. Sarvariya, Sarwadiya or Saryupari : They Sarvariya get their denomination from the ancient river Saryu, to the east of which they are principally found. they are a provincial offset from the Kanaujiyas, with whom they do not now intermarry. Their general divisions are said to be the same as those of the Kanaujiyas.

93. Sarasvats, Saraswata or Saraswat : It is a generic name of one of the Panch-Gauda classes. They are chiefly found in Kutch and Kathiwar. They are split up into two sections (1) Sorathia Sarasvats and (2) Sindhava Sarasvats, who neither eat together nor intermarry.

Sorathia Sarasvats : they are very few in number and are found mostly in Jamnagar and Karachi. They are priests of the Khatris and the Parajya Goldsmiths. Widow remarriage is permissible among them but not popular.

Sindhava Sarasvats : in addition to their being priests to Brahma Kshatris they also officiate at the ceremonies of the Lohana, Kayasthas and Depalas. They are divided into four territorial sub-sections viz., (1) Kutchi (2) Halai (3) Ghogori (4) Broach Saraswati.

94. Sevak : They are ministrants in Vaishnava temples and are considered degraded.

95. Shevada : An additional caste named in the list of the "eighty four" furnished to Dr. Drummond by Bhavanishankar of Bharoach. They are a class of Rajgurus who occupy themselves not only in the usual service of the Rajgors, but perform literary and priestly labour for the Jainas. They are also called as Tapodhan according to Rajgor. Wilson (1877) writes "of these Brahmans, little is now known".

96. Shri Gaudas. : An isolated body from Shri Gauda of

Sri Gaura, Sri God
or Shri Gaud

eastern India, found chiefly in Ahmedabad and Kheda. Followers of Vaishnav sect of Swami Narayan. They are also called as Godmalvis or Astamangalas and are found all over Gujarat. They belong to one of the five classes of Gauda Brahman, who abound in Rajputana. They have ten sub-divisions, most of which are local in Origin. They are employed as family priests and doctors. They have got two sections viz. (1) Medatavala and (2) Parvaliya.

Medatavala: designated after the place Medat in Jodhpur (Rajasthan). A section of them are found in Gujarat as Shri Gauda Brahman Meratavala Surati.

Parvaliya: also called as purvaliya — a class of Brahmans from Purva (east). Though listed in Gujarat list of Brahmans but appear to have disappeared from Gujarat, as reported by Wilson (1877).

97. Shrimallis

: They are designated after the town of Shrimal, now called Bhinmal, to the west of Mount Abu in Rajasthan. They act as family priests to the Jains of Oswal and Porwal divisions and to Shrimali Soni and Vanias. The Shrimallis are now scattered not only throughout Rajputana, but throughout Gujarat and Kachha, central India etc. In Consequence of this dispersion of their body they have been broken up into several distinct castes. Among these may be mentioned (1) Marwadi Shrimali (2) Mewadi Shrimali (3) Kachhi Shrimali (4) Kathiawadi Shrimali (5) Gujarati Shrimali (6) Surati Shrimali (7) Ghoghari Shrimali (8) Khambati Shrimali. The custom of eight perambulations round the fire at marriage also give them the name

of Ashtmangla.

98. Sompara, Sompura or Sompada : Designated after somnath in south kathlawad. They are Shaivite and incharge of the temple. They are skilled in guarding the spots sacred to Lord Krishna.
99. Sthitishas : According to Wilson (1877), "of these so called Brahmans nothing certain can now be heard". They are present in Amreli according to Rajgor. According to some and old records they are a synonym of the present day Sompura.
100. Tangamodiyas or Thangmodiya : Wilson (1877) states, "the Tangamodiyas are Brahmans of dubious position, perhaps on account of the liberties which they have taken when in straits for a livelihood". According to Rajgor they are worshippers of Lord Shanker who took up any occupation due to economic difficulties.
101. Talajiya : They are named after the town of Talaja, south-west of Ghogha. They are chiefly found in Surat and Jambusar. Many of them are shopkeepers.
102. Tapodhans or Tapodanas : The tapodana brahmans are found on the banks of Tapti near surat. Most of them are cultivators, and many of them act as pujaris of the temples of Shiva, the offerings of which, contrary to general usage, they accept. They have consequently not the respect of the local brahmanhood. They are also referred to as Bharada in villages, as they do ovation of lighted lamps of the idol of the temple. But this is not considered as a respectable term. They are divided into 30 sub-sections called Vibhags.
103. Tilinga, Tailinga or Trilinga: They are Brahmans of Andhra Pradesh ; also called as Tailinga (from Trilinga) from the language spoken there. Their

settled offshoots in Gujarat are now extinct, according to Wilson (1877), "individual Brahmans of the Talanga country visit the principal places of Hindu pilgrimage in Gujarat as Siddhapur, Dwarka, Pattan, Somnath, Dakor etc".

104. Titraga

: One of the additional castes named in the list of 'Eighty four' furnished to Dr. Drummond by Bhavanishankar of Bharoach. Wilson (1877) writes, "of these Brahmans, little is now known".

105. Trilotyi or Tilotyias

: Tiloyas or trilotyias are one of the additional castes named in the list of 'eighty four' furnished to Dr. Drummond by Bhavanishankar of Bharuch. According to Wilson (1877), little is now known about them. Rajgor and Charotar Sarv Sangrah, however mention their presence in Kheda district.

106. Udambara

: Designated after the Sage Udambara. They officiate among lower caste. They are chiefly found in Ahmedabad, Kheda and districts of Panchmahal. in very few numbers. They have three subdivisions and are engaged as family priests are also beggars and a few are cultivators.

107. Unevals

: Designated after the village of Una in Kathiwar. Most of them are cultivators and beggars and are found chiefly in Baroda, Kathiawar, Panchamahar and Surat. They are a section of the Sihori Audichyas.

108. Utkal

: The utkalas are the Brahman of Orissa. An offshoot of whom is said to be found at Dehagaum, north of Ahmedabad. They act as gurus to cultivators, and do not have a high standing in the neighbourhood.

109. Vadadras, Valadras,

: The vadadra brahmans receive their

Varadra, Valadhra or
Valandra

designation from the village Valad or Vadad near Ahmedabad. They are Devi Bhakts. Many of them are mendicants. Considerable number of them are cultivators and merchants. They are chiefly found in Kaira. According to Charotar Sarv Sangrah, they have two broad divisions (1) Tarpada Vadadra Brahman and (2) Mewada Vadadra Brahman. They have sixteen Gotras among them.

110. Valmika, Balam or Valam : Designated after *rishi* (sage) Valmiki, from whom they claim their descent. According to Enthoven (1920), they take their name from Valam a town in the Patan subdivision in the Gaikwar's territory, they are chiefly found in Kheda, Panchmahal, Idar, Ahmedabad and Kaira. Most of them are beggars and peasants.

111. Vatulas : According to Wilson (1877), the Vatulas are said to belong to the neighbourhood of Amreli in Kathiawad.

112. Vayadas : They are priests of the Vayada Vantias and are said to have originally come from Bet Island in west Kathiawar. They take their name from Vayad, a village near Patan, in Ahmedabad district. They are not very numerous, but are found in the Kheda and Ahmedabad district.

113. Vajnikvalas or Yagnikval : They claim descent from Yajnavalkya and are principally found in surat.

LIST C**SUB-GROUPS OF GUJARATI BRAHMANS WHICH
DO NOT EXIST TODAY**

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Basuldars | 9. Lalatas | 17. Rayasthala |
| 2. Chapila | 10. Magmaryas | 18. Rayakvala |
| 3. Dravidas | 11. Mathura | 19. Sanadhya |
| 4. Hiranajiyas | 12. Modh-maitra | 20. Shevada |
| 5. Itavala | 13. Padmivilas | 21. Sthitishas |
| 6. Jilas | 14. Pangora | 22. Tilinga |
| 7. Kalingas | 15. Predatavala | 23. Titraga |
| 8. Kundus | 16. Rampuras | 24. Trilotiya |

Note:- All these subgroups could not be located by J. Wilson, way back in 1877, when he studied the Gujarati Brahmans. Sahadhya have been reported not to be found in Gujarat by Rajgor.

LIST D**SECTIONS OF MAJOR SUBGROUPS OF GUJARATI BRAHMAN**

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. Abhira | : A section of Audichya, who are Gor (priests) to Ahirs. |
| 2. Baradas | : They are split from Vishalnagara and Vadnagara sections of the Nagar brahmans. |
| 3. Bhukhaniyas | : It is a surname of the Audichya brahman in Gohilwada region. |
| 4. Chovishas | : One of the territorial divisions of the Trivedi Mewada brahmans. |
| 5. Dadhichi | : A division of the Audichya. |
| 6. Durmala | : A section of Khedawal brahmans as reported by Rajgor. |
| 7. Gurjar-gaud | : A synonym of Shri-Gaur brahman as mentioned by Rajgor. |
| 8. Karedas | : An offset of the Maratha Kareda brahmans, have got mixed with the Audichyas, as reported by Rajgor. |
| 9. Kharkheliyas | : A section of Kapil brahmans according to Rajgor.. |
| 10. Maru | : A section of Audichya. |
| 11. Mastana | : A synonym of anavala brahman. |
| 12. Modh-maitra | : A section of modhs, as mentioned by rajgor. |
| 13. Napalas | : A section of audichya. |
| 14. Oswal | : A section of srimali brahmans. |

15. Parashariya : They belong to the Audichya stock.
16. Rodhavalas : They are Audichya brahmans from Siddhpur, as reported by Rajgor.
17. Sajodhara : A section of anavala.
18. Sarvariya : A section of kanyakubja.
19. Unevals : A section of sihori audichya.

by territory, cuisine, dress, customs and rituals a vibrant folk and artistic tradition including Garba folk dance and kite flying. The outstanding cultural traits include a very high degree of heterogeneity and segmentation among major communities, hypergamous relationships of divisions in such communities and across communities, territorial endogamy (*gol*), and vegetarianism. The formations that stand out in Gujarat are the large genetic inter-dinning categories of the Maldhari (pastoralists, *thertasili* and so on. There is much larger sharing of cultural traits among communities located within the cultural-linguistic regions and across the state.

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